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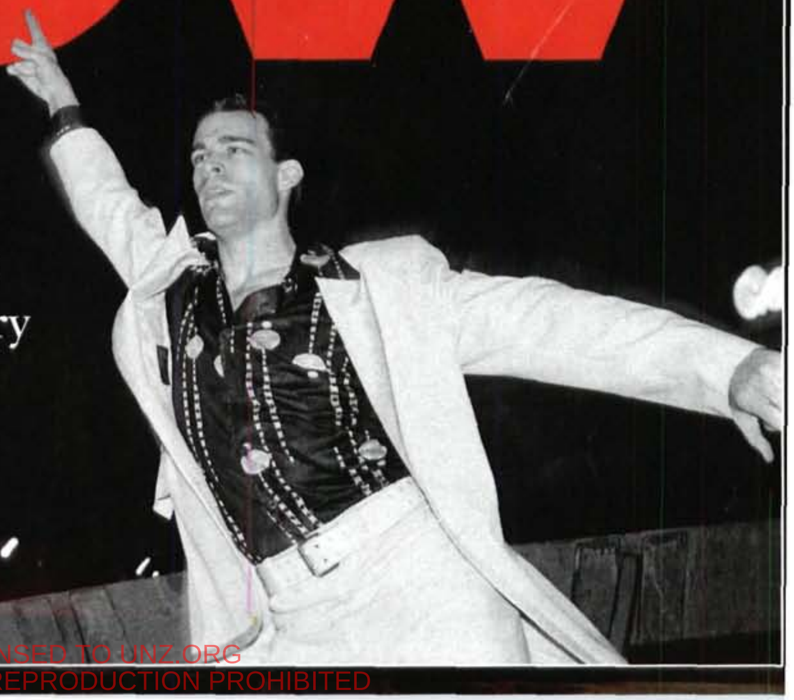

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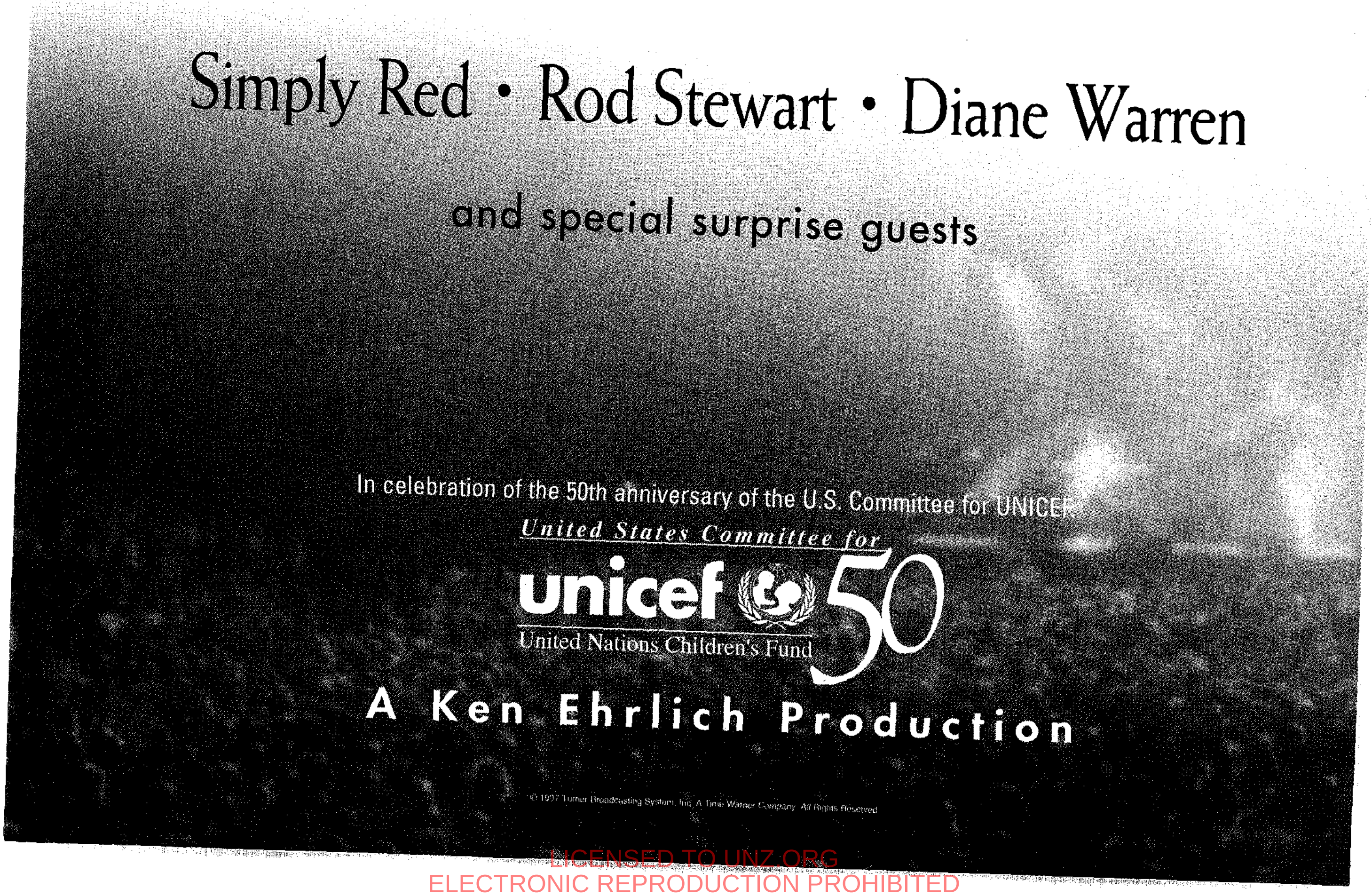

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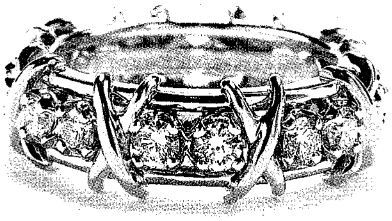

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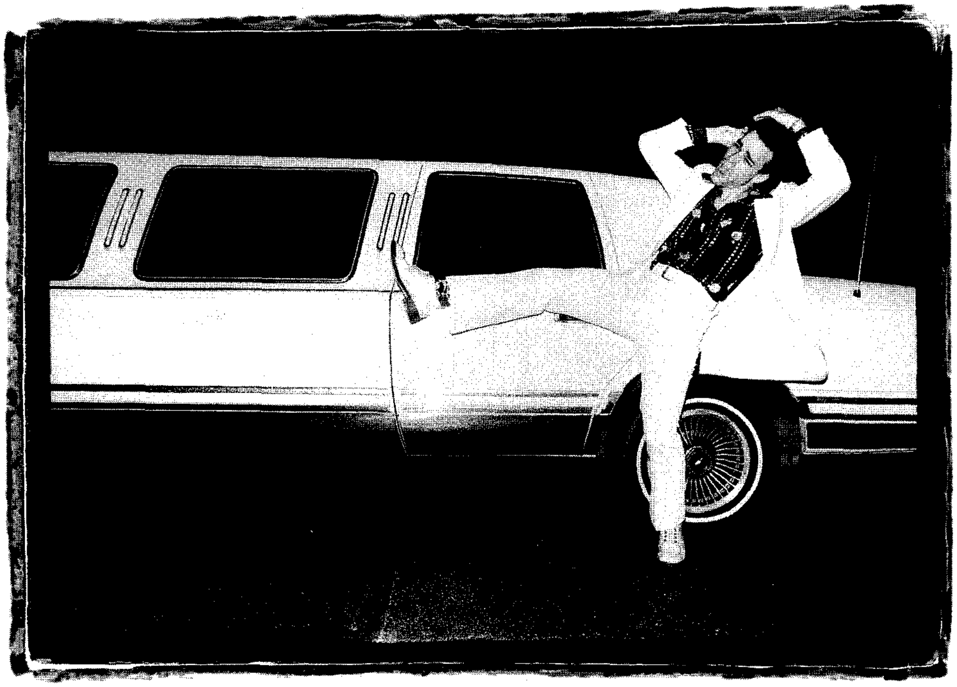

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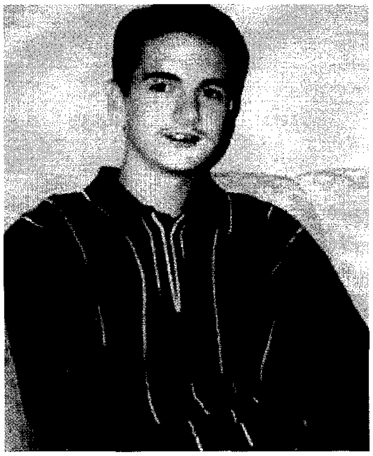

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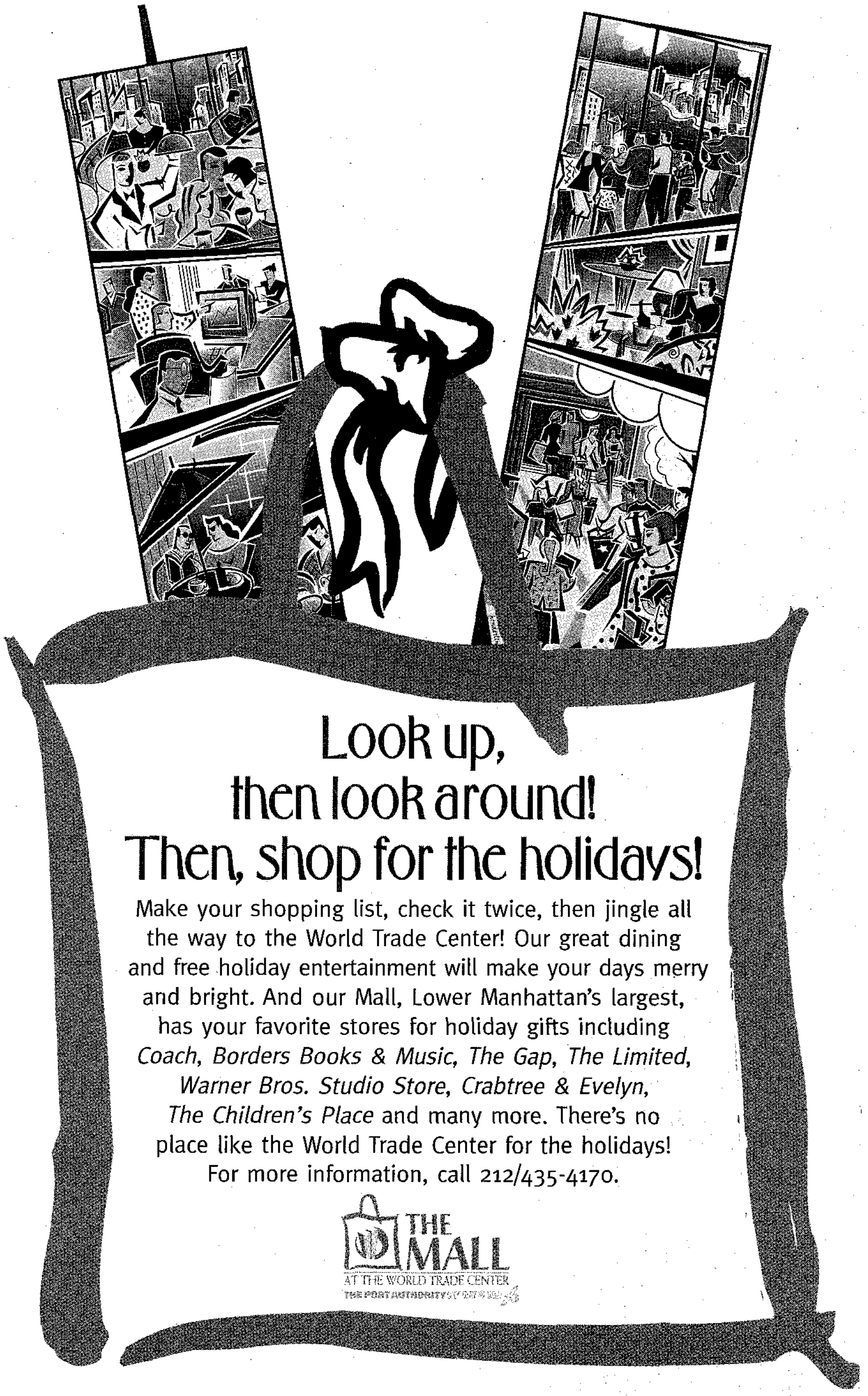

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LETTERS DECEMBER 8, 1997

New News?

Roger Ailes's defensive line rushes into the breach: He's not mad, just crazy like a Fox; dating etiquette escapes our Alaskan single guy.

TO HEAR DAVID BROCK TELL IT, Roger Ailes has no leadership skills, and Fox News Channel has no news skills ["Roger Ailes Is Mad As Hell," November 17]. So why are he and FNC succeeding? Why did more than 80 CNBC employees jump ship to join Roger? Why have virtually all of the Fortune 500 chief executives come on this so-called fledgling channel to air their views? Maybe it's because these folks are discovering what a lot of everyday folks already know. Fox is different. And just because you don't march to the same journalistic drum doesn't mean you're not beating a message powerful enough for all to hear.

I told Mr. Brock as much when he interviewed me, as did countless others, whose good words apparently never made print. Roger had no political litmus test for me or for anyone else. All he asked is that we think outside the dots. Roger Ailes and Rupert Murdoch have a different and more demanding challenge: Look at the world, not as you want others to see it, but as it is, plain and simple. No slant. No bias. No kidding.

Neil P. Cavuto
Anchor and Managing Editor
Fox News Channel
MANHATTAN

I TOLD DAVID BROCK THAT ROGER AILES was one of the ablest story researchers and news organizers I had known. I emphasized that his integrity, forthrightness, and zest for the true story were unusual virtues in the media. Subsequently, I was astonished to read Mr. Brock's attack on Mr. Ailes, wherein not a single word of our interview appeared. Indeed, there was no serious attempt to acknowledge, through other interviews, his remarkable achievements and his lasting friendships with people from all walks of life. It is a transparent irony that Mr. Brock is practicing the very tabloid sins that he accuses Roger Ailes of practicing. If Mr. Brock wrote his article to impeach the credibility of Roger Ailes and Rupert Murdoch, so as to try to slow down their growing news network, such a tactic won't work with the American people.

Lewis E. Lehrman
MANHATTAN

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE MY QUOTE ABOUT Roger Ailes being "very angry" become both the premise and title of David Brock's article. Had he reported accurately from our conversation, Brock would have had me calling Ailes an angry genius. He chose instead, driven by some angry agenda of his own, to print the adjective and delete the noun. Calling Roger Ailes "angry" and leaving it at that is like dismissing Winston Churchill as some cranky British P.M. who drank too much.

Christopher Matthews
Washington Bureau Chief,
San Francisco Examiner, *and*
Host, CNBC's Hardball
WASHINGTON, D. C.

"DARK PRINCE OF RIGHT-WING ATTACK politics"? Yes, as we all know, there's no such thing as left-wing attack politics. The candidates and values Ailes represented did differ in one very significant respect from his Democratic counterparts: They enjoyed the support of a majority of American citizens.

How can a political partisan "reinvent himself as a newsman"? Ask Tim Russert, Jeff Greenfield, Ken Bode, Bill Bradley, and even Saint Bill Moyers, all—and many more—of whom are former Democratic operatives. One might argue Ailes's challenge is greater, as he carries the burden of having helped elect three presidents of the United States. Newsman? Gee, I'm not sure he's up to it.

But of all Brock's shabby screeds, the most reprehensible is the false charge that Ailes "introduced Willie Horton into American politics." Everybody in the business of media and politics has long known Roger Ailes neither made the infamous Willie Horton TV commercial nor created him as an issue. (And they know who did make him an issue: Al Gore.) News to you, Mr. Brock?

Jay Severin
SAG HARBOR, N.Y.

David Brock responds: Notwithstanding Neil Cavuto's comments in our interview, Fox's slant and bias are evident to any viewer. As is the common practice in journalism, I interviewed many people, including Lewis Lehrman, whose comments did not make it into the final article, though many of Ailes's achievements were cited. My notes show that I quoted Chris Matthews accurately. None of the former Democratic political operatives now in journalism cited by Jay Severin is the head of a news division. As head of NBC's Washington bureau, Tim Russert comes closest, but he has made a much smoother transition than Ailes. I stand by the point that the Bush campaign made Willie Horton an issue in 1988, as was made plain by Bush's own invocation of Horton on the campaign trail. Ailes has denied any involvement with the group that made the commercial featuring Horton, but two former Ailes Communications employees were involved.

Bad Manners

I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE PROGRESS of Jay Ramras's search for a Jewish bride because one of my co-workers was scheduled to date him ["Gotham: Nice Jewish Boy Seeks Hot-Blooded Jewish Girl for Love in Colder Climes, Part III," November 17]. Needless to say, I was shocked and disappointed to read Mr. Ramras's disparaging remarks about his latest dates, one of whom, based on the timing, may have been my co-worker. This gal (whose telephone number was given to the Alaskan restaurateur by a family friend) ignored all of Mr. Ramras's phone calls prior to reading about him in *New York* Magazine. However, because of her trust in your publication, she decided to give him a chance. Obviously, her trust was misplaced, since not only did the alleged bride-seeker speak unkindly about her, but *New York* Magazine chose to print his remarks.

Joan Greenberg
MANHATTAN

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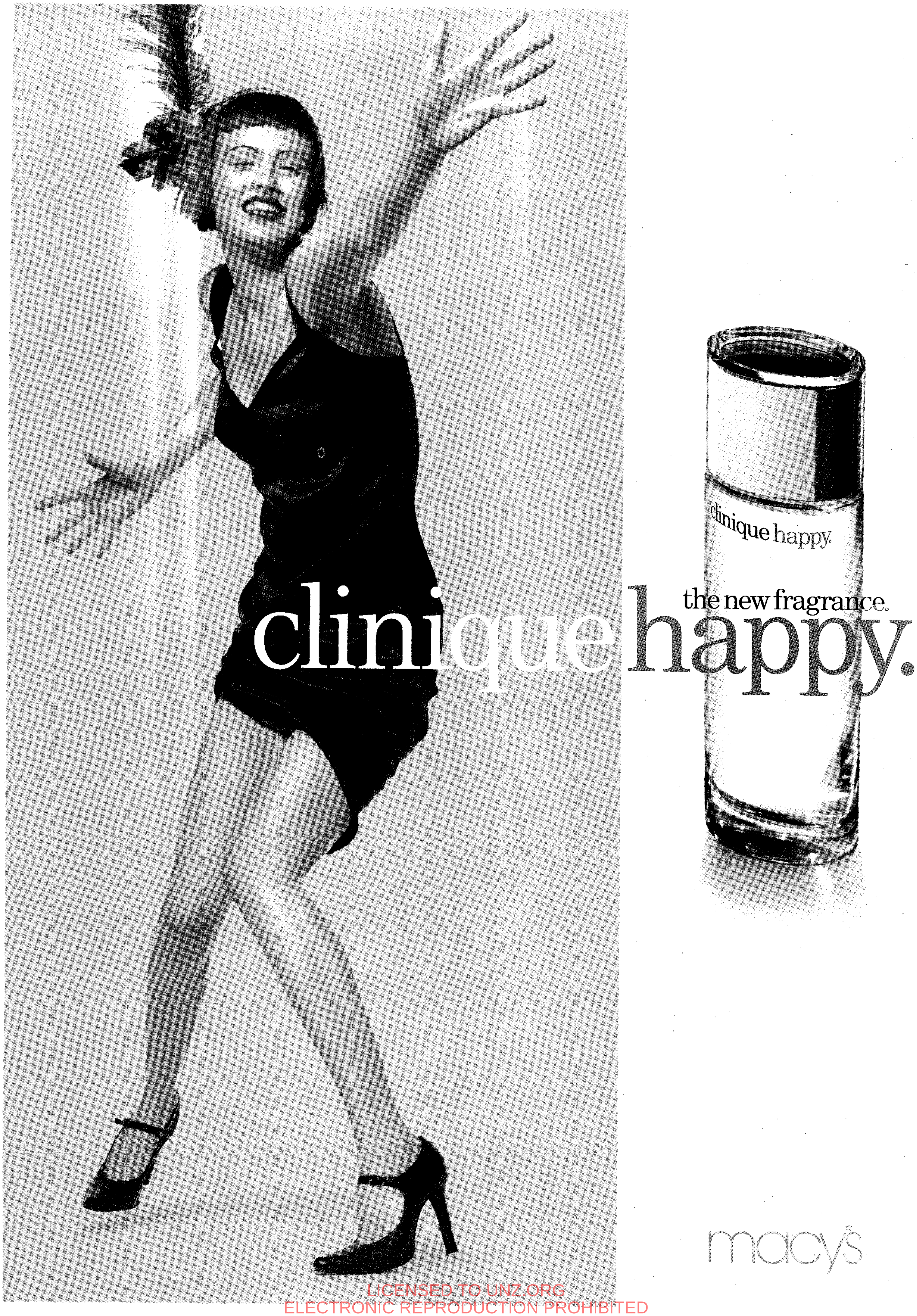
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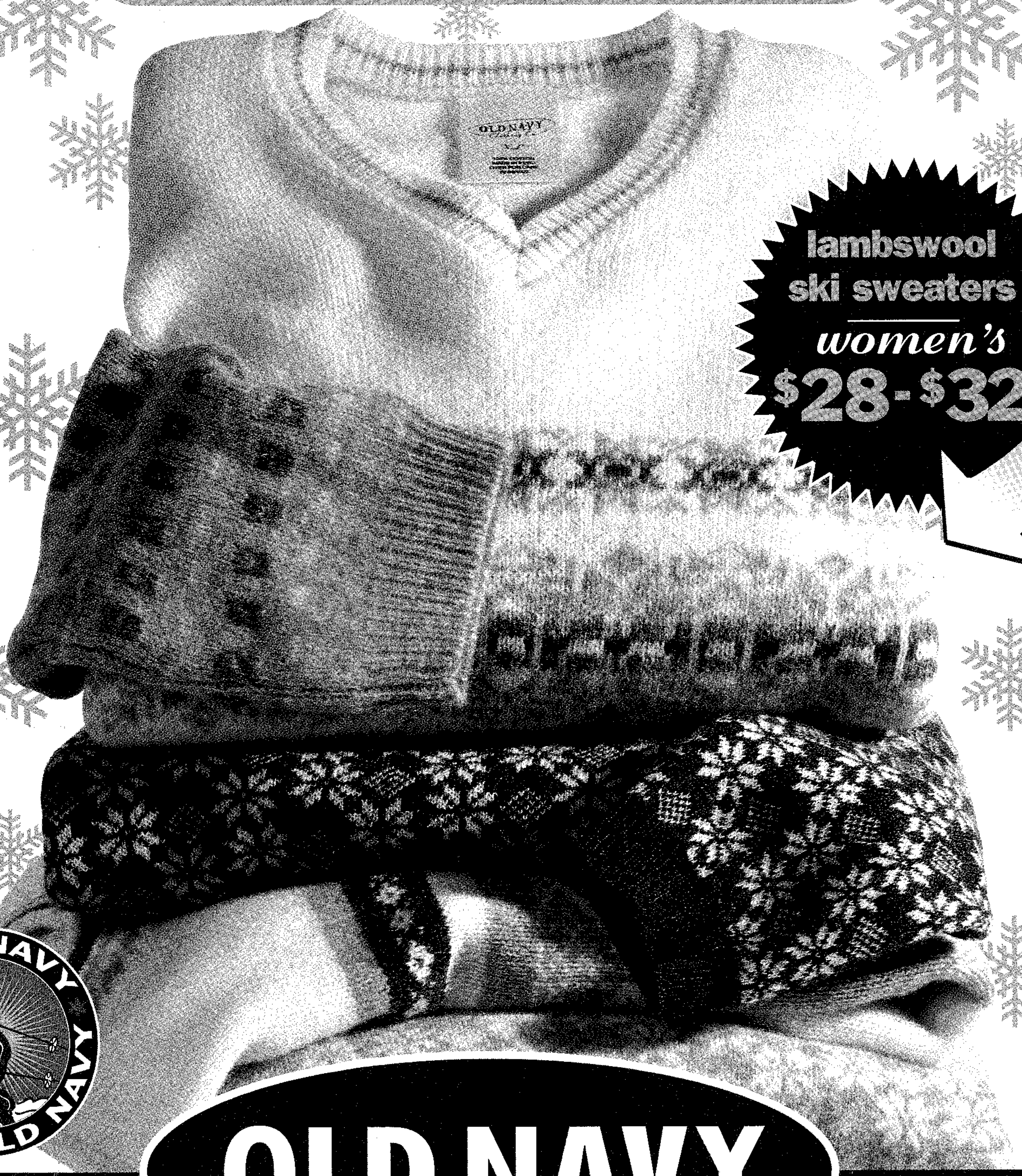let it snow

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INTELLIGENCER

POPPING THE HANDS THAT FEED THEM

The heads of VH1 may not know it, but there is anarchy in their ranks. **Tad Low** and **Woody Thompson,** the creators and executive producers of the network's top-rated show, *Pop-Up Video,* are incensed that the music network is about to seal a deal allowing Bell Atlantic to do a *Pop-Up* ad campaign. Says Low: "They did this without asking us. We have an anti-commercial voice. Now it appears that we've sold out to the phone company. We plan to turn our fans against the ad." Low and Thompson have the means to do so through their Website (www.popupvideo.com). This would not be the first time the rebellious duo raged against VH1 online. The Website regularly trashes the artists and the network executives, calling them "the forces of evil" and complaining that VH1 is "deeply 'in bed' with all the record companies and bands." They've also taken to flashing subversive messages on the show right before the credits, subliminal missives like "Our staff is currently being poisoned by poor working conditions." Low would say only—with more than a hint of humor—"I cannot confirm or deny anything about these subliminal messages. It could have been a technical error." (A VH1 spokesman, who says he is aware that there is a Website but is unaware of the show's flashed messages, claims the ads comply with the terms of Low's agreement with VH1.) But Low clearly isn't afraid of tweaking the suits: "We don't work for VH1. This is the show that has got people talking about what once was the lamest channel on the cable system. I'm sure they could kick us off the show and try to do it themselves, but I'd like to see them try." The forces at VH1 may wince at the insults, but they say they intend to grin and bear it. "I certainly take issue with their position on the channel," says a spokesman, "but there's no question that *Pop-Up* is essential to VH1's increased ratings success. We value Tad and Woody's irreverence; it's what makes the show work." Just in case the irreverence starts to wear thin, the *Pop-Up* guys just signed a development deal with ABC-TV.

THE CUOMOS' MUST-READ: *PLAYGIRL*

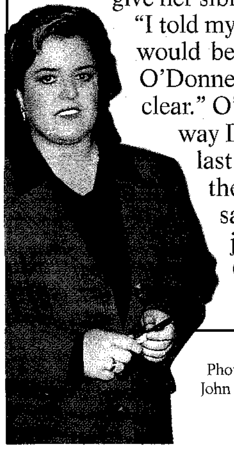
The ribbing is out of control in the Cuomo family now that youngest son **Christopher Cuomo** has been named one of "The Year's 10 Sexiest Men" in the current *Playgirl,* following in the footsteps of his father, ex-governor **Mario Cuomo,** one of the ten sexiest of 1985. Now Andrew is the only male Cuomo whose virility has not been celebrated by *Playgirl.* Christopher, of course, "made the list because he's good-looking and built like an Adonis," says his proud papa. "I was none of those things . . . but still I had Matilda, so they thought I had to be secretly sexy." Christopher, who in the *Playgirl* photo wears a T-shirt from the housing project his brother founded, says, "I won't speak for myself, but—unlike my father—Andrew does not need to get by on looks alone." What type of razzing has the 27-year-old bodybuilder gotten at home? "My father said, 'Christopher has potential; I am promise fulfilled, in terms of sexiness.' " Christopher, for one, is sure that Secretary of Housing and Urban Development **Andrew Cuomo** will make the list yet: "They saved their best selection for last."

Chris Cuomo: Family inheritance

Madonna: Going gray?

A ROSIE OUTLOOK FOR ONE CANDIDATE

Can **Rosie O'Donnell** do for her brother what she did for Tickle Me Elmo? **Daniel O'Donnell,** an attorney who lives on the Upper West Side, is considering a run for New York State Senate next year. O'Donnell's would-be seat is currently held by **Franz Leichter,** who—after almost nabbing a job as ambassador to his native Austria—is evidently being considered for another Clinton-administration post. Should Leichter leave his district, which extends from Chelsea to Riverdale, O'Donnell would be more than happy to throw his hat into the ring. "I have no intention of running against Franz," he says. "But if he steps down, I'd seriously consider giving it a go." Whether Rosie will hop on the campaign bus remains to be seen; one political insider reports that the Queen of Nice has vowed to give her sibling as much campaign cash as he needs. "I told my sister of my intentions, and she said she would be happy to help in any way she could," O'Donnell reports. "What that entails is still unclear." O'Donnell, who is president of the Broadway Democrats, is counting on more than his last name to win him the election. "I've got the credentials and the experience," he says. "And no one's going to vote for me just because they love my sister." Rosie O'Donnell did not return calls.



THE NEW HOT DOG FOR CELEBRITY GALS

Is it puppy love that brought estranged friends **Madonna** and **Sandra Bernhard** back to-

Photographs: clockwise from top right, Gerardo Somoza/Outline; Colin Mason/London Features; John Barrett/Globe Photos.

Paul Reubens:
Pee-wee's prime-time adventure

REBUILDING PEE-WEE'S PLAYHOUSE

Imagine Pee-wee Herman all grown up, playing the accordion and performing with his wacky wife in an adult playhouse—a small-town Holiday Inn, where other guest stars would also perform. That's one of the ideas for Imagine's new **Paul Reubens** TV series: a cross between a family sitcom and a variety show. Imagine was originally developing a variety show, while rival Carsey-Werner was trying to sign the comedian to a sitcom. But Carsey-Werner's project got bumped in favor of Imagine's, according to *The Hollywood Reporter.* One production source, however, says the script for Carsey-Werner's sitcom may be the basis of Imagine's pilot. Meanwhile, Carsey-Werner is talking to Reubens about hosting a quiz show. NBC's **Warren Littlefield** dangled a thirteen-week commitment before Reubens and Imagine, becoming only the most aggressive of several network execs who have been wooing the star, six years after CBS abruptly cancelled *Pee-wee's Playhouse.* "Paul Reubens and Imagine are definitely going to be in business together," says an Imagine spokesman, who declined to comment about NBC. Carsey-Werner's rep would only confirm that they're "still developing projects" with Reubens, whose manager called all details about the new series "way premature."

Ian Schrager:
The Royalton Palace

gether? The two have reportedly patched up their differences since fighting over **Ingrid Casares,** but their taste in companions remains identical. The Material Girl recently acquired an Italian greyhound puppy, a rare champion breed that "needs a lot of attention and affection," according to one breeder (cost: about $1,500). No sooner did Madonna select her pooch than Bernhard called on an associate of Madonna's breeder. "She said she was very interested in getting one," says the California breeder, "but she should be prepared for a delicate temperament." She's friends with Madonna, isn't she?

SCHRAGER PASSED; MATCH SPLASHED

HOME AWAY FROM HOTEL: After several anxious weeks, **Ian Schrager,** who put bids on apartments at two Central Park West addresses, has been approved by the board of the more prestigious building, and not a moment too soon. According to building insiders, the trendy hotelier, whose second daughter, **Ava Louis,** was born in September, is purchasing two apartments within the building to combine into one large residence. The price: a staggering $9 million. Schrager, a longtime Upper West Sider, would not comment on the purchase.

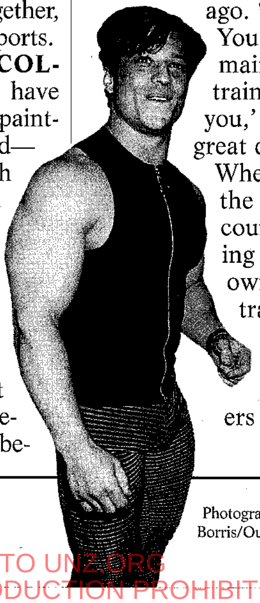
ICE-CAPADES: Look for a new balletic polish in Olympic skater **Ekaterina Gordeeva**'s performances. It turns out that her mystery beau, the Alexander Godunov type she was spotted with over sushi recently, is Russian-born ballet dancer **Igor Zelensky,** a star with the Kirov and London's Royal Ballet. Zelensky used to dance with the New York City Ballet, and he was in town recently for the Diaghilev gala at Lincoln Center. He and Gordeeva twirled through town together, a dance-world source reports.

SOHO'S PRIMARY COLORS: SoHo residents have been wondering who's painting their part of town red—and yellow. Recently, both Match downtown and the New Museum building, which is currently being readied for future tenants **Spike Lee, Ricki Lake,** and **Madonna,** were spattered with the vivid hues. An insider at the New Museum site theorizes, "The building is being prepared as a vacant shell for tenants by union labor, but future interior structures might be built nonunion. So the union's been flexing its muscles, staging picket lines, threatening to pull its workers off the foundation job." Though a flair for semi-gloss smears doesn't strike the insider as unionesque ("It's not the way they choose to handle things," he explains), others remain skeptical. Says Match owner **Billy Gilroy:** "The front of my restaurant is covered in yellow paint, and people are looking at us like *who did we wrong?* I'm comforted to think it was the union and not someone I fired or tossed out."

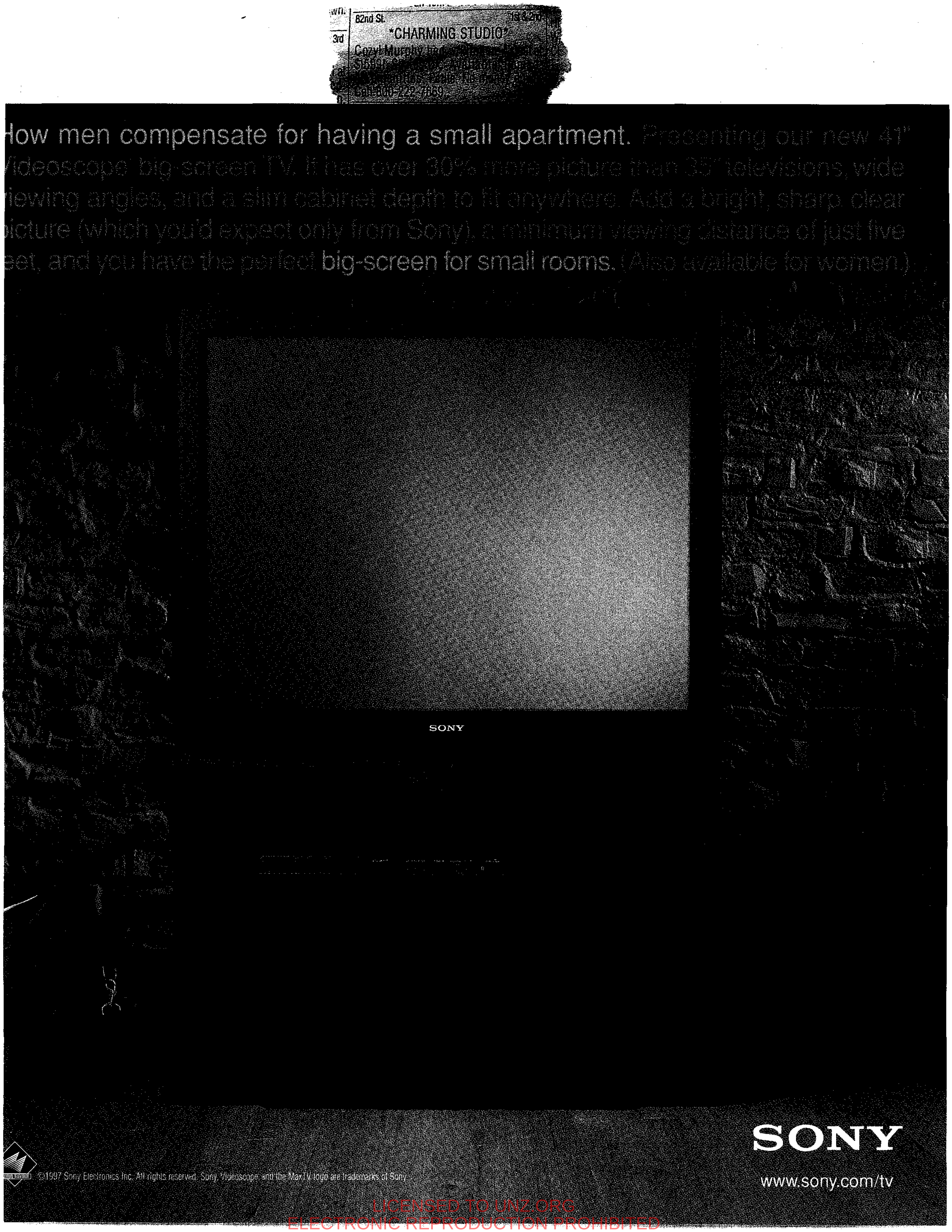
Additional reporting: Kate Coyne

BARTON MUSCLES-OUT INDIE TRAINERS

More bile is being pumped than iron these days at **David Barton's** uptown gym. Last week, Barton sent out letters saying that freelance trainers can no longer use his 85th Street facility, "at the direction of my insurance company," unless they become salaried employees. The edict reverses a promise Barton made to the twenty or so trainers when he first opened the gym three years ago. "He said, 'Bring your clients to my gym. You can train them for free, as long as you maintain five clients there,' " explains one trainer. "He even said, 'We'll refer clients to you,' " says another trainer. "It seemed like a great deal, so I took a lot of my clients there." When it was time for the clients to renew for the second year, Barton offered them discounts on long-term memberships, reassuring them that they'd still be able to use their own trainers. "Now I'm tied in to a contract, and I can't use my trainer," gripes a client. "Sometimes in business policies change, prices change, things change," explains Barton, who says that the trainers "have had a free ride for a while."



Photographs: clockwise from top left, Rose Hartman/Globe Photos; Dan Borris/Outline; Rose Hartman/Globe Photos.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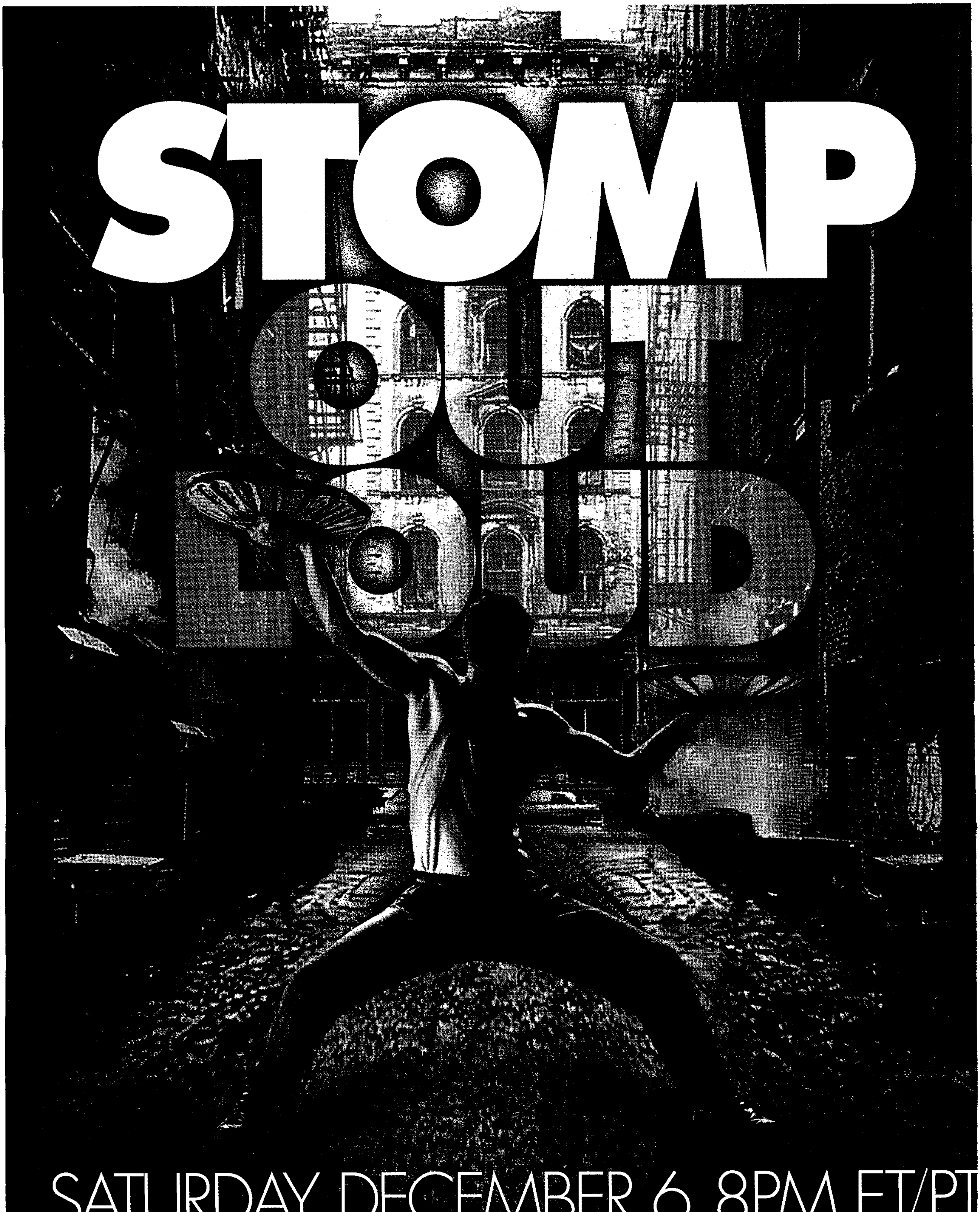

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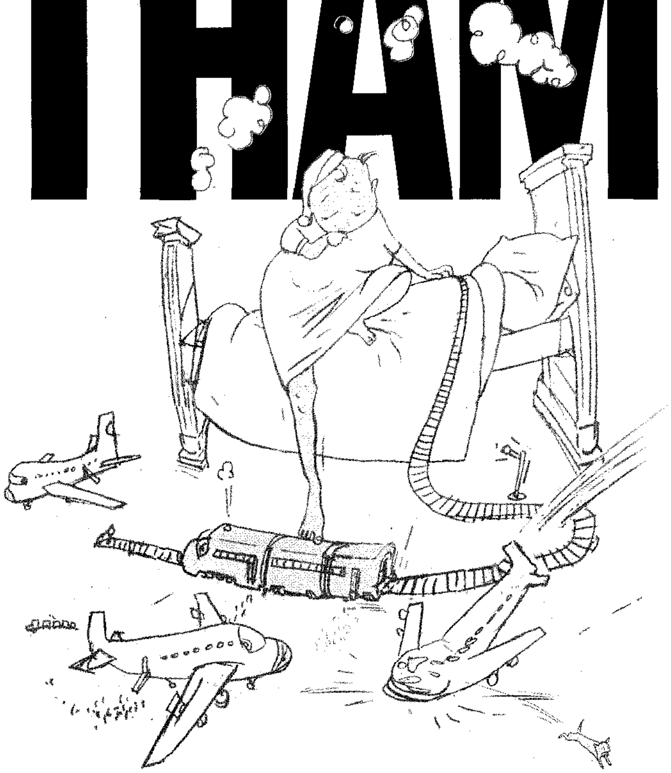
GOTHAM



TRAIN IN VAIN

Why won't Rudy get us to the airport on time?

IF YOU'RE REASONABLY PATIENT, getting out to the airport on mass transit isn't a problem. You hop on the A train to Howard Beach and then get on a bus that connects the subway station to the airport. It takes almost two hours. If you're really patient, you can wait until the Port Authority builds a $1.5 billion light-rail system connecting JFK with the LIRR station in Jamaica and the subway station in Howard Beach. Assuming the project gets approved, construction will take two and a half years.

But be careful about assuming anything.

If New York were a normal city, you'd be able to hop a train right in the middle of town, put your feet up, and wait to arrive at your terminal. Sound like a dream? Since 1992, when all airline passengers in or out of New York began paying a $3 surcharge on tickets, the funding has been available. And last year, the Regional Plan Association, an advocacy group, even sketched out a proposal for making it a reality, by essentially turning JFK into a stop on the Long Island Rail Road.

It was a nice idea, but there was a glitch. Legally, the surcharge money can only fund a transit system that serves the airports and nothing else. So the PA came up with an extravagant plan to build a whole new rail loop from the old Alexander's store on 59th Street to La Guardia to JFK—22 miles in all. Another nice idea, but it would have cost billions.

The PA went back to the drawing board and returned with a compromise: an 8.4-mile track connecting the airports with the subway stop in Howard Beach—likely to be, at best, a marginal improvement over the current subway-bus combo.

Mayor Giuliani, who has never had much use for the PA, did not hide his displeasure with a plan that would leave tourists half stranded in the wilds of Queens. He advised the FAA to reject the plan.

That's when Governor Pataki stepped in, promising to pay the city $300 million in airport fees and to fund a study on the viability of extending the N line all the way

(continued on page 18)

SPIN CYCLE

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF P.R.

Pedestrian Terror: Who's to Blame for the City's Mean Streets?

● "Bicycles are a very big quality-of-life problem. It may be the thing that was most mentioned to me when I was campaigning."
—*Mayor Giuliani, in the New York* Times

● "Bicyclists kill slightly less than one person a year. There's no doubt at all that motor vehicles are far and above the greatest problem."
—*John Kaehny, Transportation Alternatives*

● "[Pedestrian accidents involving horses] are usually not the horse's fault. It's the driver's fault."
—*Arty Nichols, hansom-cab driver*

● "Actually, a lot of the time, unfortunately, the pedestrian is in the wrong."
—*Lori Millen, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*

● "On a per-stroll basis, New York rates fairly well for pedestrian safety."
—*Brian Cohen, staff engineer at Environmental Working Group, which recently published a study entitled "Mean Streets"*

CAMEO

Meet the New Boss

MEMO TO: HARRY EVANS FROM: DEBBY KRENEK (CC: FRED DRASNER). Harry: Let me assure you, all of us here at the *Daily News* are said to be delighted to have you aboard, and I, as editor—well into my fourth week, incidentally—look forward to your input. Your years in the newsroom blah blah blah notwithstanding, however, a period of adjustment from your Random House stint is inevitable. So regarding those suggestions, a few points:

● While I'm proud of our reporters, offering them all $3 million contracts "before Murdoch bigfoots in and signs every bloody one" simply isn't feasible.

● A satirical comic strip based on the life of Alberto Vitale would be of limited interest to our readers.

● A literary salon/breakfast structured around the day's Rush & Molloy column *is* intriguing. Let's have a power lunch. Your desk or mine?

stration by Istvan, Banyai. Photograph by Angela Cappetta/Retna.

JFK *continued from page 17*

to La Guardia. Giuliani came around.

With the clash of local political fiefdoms peaceably resolved, the rest should have been easy, yet we're still waiting. The FAA was supposed to approve construction last month, but according to a spokeswoman, it is "still reviewing the application."

That, it turns out, involves hearing from the airline industry's lobbyists, the Air Transport Association. You might think the airlines would be overjoyed by any plan that makes it easier to get to Kennedy, and maybe they are, but the ATA is a very literal-minded group, and it sees the project as a misappropriation of funds. According to Ed Merlis of the ATA, the Port Authority should "invest every possible penny" of the surcharge fund in sprucing up the airports themselves.

Furthermore, he argues—and here's where the story gets twisted—that the Port Authority's proposal won't work *because passengers will have to change trains.* But the whole dumb compromise was designed only to satisfy an airline industry paranoid about seeing ticket-surcharge funds used for anything that could possibly benefit anyone else.

The train could be a long time coming.

New York desperately needs a better system, but expensive, half-assed compromises are worse than nothing at all. Anything less than a direct rail link (either by subway or by the LIRR) between the airports and midtown Manhattan is a stupid waste. Even Newark has a shiny rail system that will soon connect its airport and downtown train station, funded with—guess what?—airline-passenger surcharges. If Sharpe James can get one for Newark, there's no reason that Giuliani, the conqueror of the "ungovernable" city, can't get one for us.

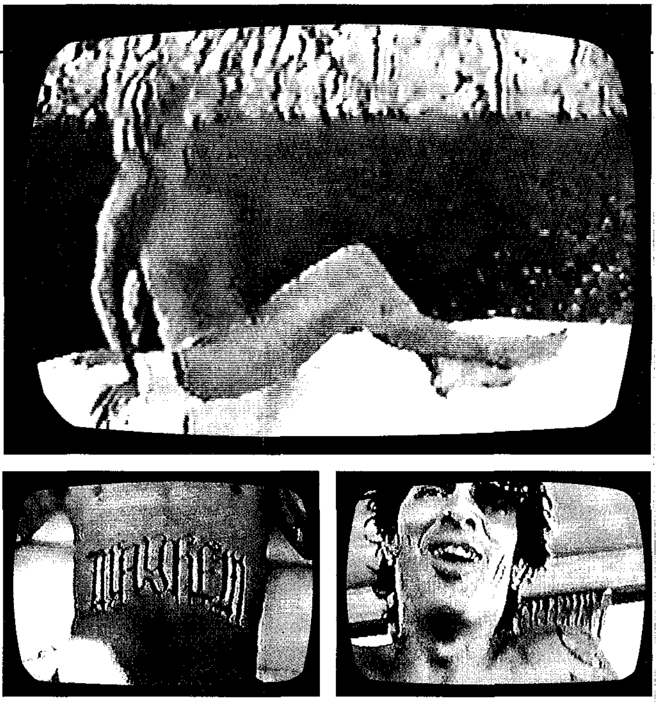
And that'd be a good thing in New York that Rudy really could take credit for.

KARRIE JACOBS

CRITIC'S EYE

Tape of The Tail

Notes on America's funniest home video.



Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee in their popular new video.

IF PAMELA ANDERSON AND Tommy Lee finally sign those well-thumbed divorce papers, their infamous home porn videotape—which, having made the rounds in Hollywood, is currently in high circulation among New York's media fraternity—may take on a semi-tragic dimension. Especially the moment when Pam addresses herself to Tommy's erect penis, which sways impressively in the breeze as its owner tools, rather erratically, down the highway. "Baby, don't hurt him," she says. "This has got to get me through the rest of my life. Kids, this *is* going to get me through the rest of my life." That scene could become a test of whether compassion for this ill-starred couple, or for any celebrities, is truly possible in our sardonic times.

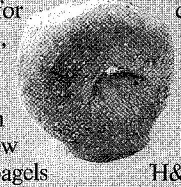
So far, the courts have offered the Lees no comfort in their almost-two-year battle to keep the tape—which features their sexual exploits in a hot tub, in a car, and on a boat, with Tommy's equipment stealing all the scenes—from an aroused public. Little wonder that journalists, still stinging from the post-Diana backlash, seem particularly excited by it: Aside from their smirking voyeurism, they have a professional interest in legal decisions governing the images of famous people. And with even the president's penis under scrutiny these days, no one can be sure that media prurience has any lines left to cross.

At fanland's gazillion Pamela Websites, aside from general joy, there is considerable debate. Much of it assumes that tabloid roadkill like the Lees, having crossed the lines themselves long ago, have only themselves to blame. And most people are too savvy, or too cynical, about the P.R. craft to believe the tape was stolen from the Lees rather than staged and leaked to give fans what they really want. But the footage alone will not resolve this debate. On the one hand, the action, dialogue, and rough-cut editing suspiciously resemble a customized tribute to low-budget porn, of a sort that has recently become a naïve genre unto itself. On the other hand, the idle glee of these two boffers fits the way we imagine they'd fool around by themselves—she is a little too coy, he is a little too cocky—and there's enough surplus goofiness to suggest that they really are in love. Either way, because the tape is acted out for an audience (whether us or them), it has a lot more human interest than its scandalous predecessors like the Rob Lowe hotel tape, or the Roswell alien-autopsy footage. It's more likely to produce celebrity-sex sequels, too. Step up, kids, and choose a couple.

ANDREW ROSS

CUISINE

The Shmear Campaign

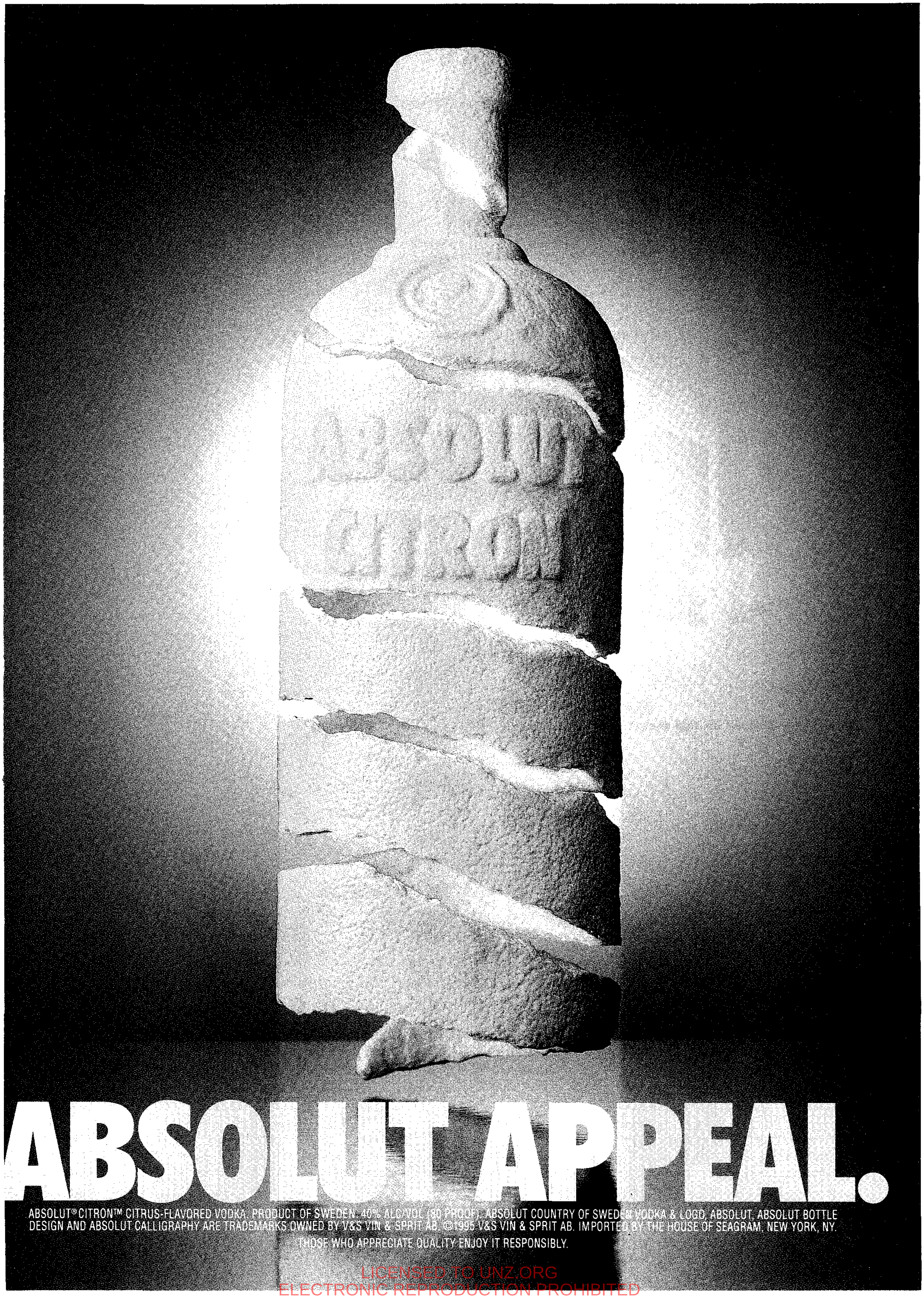


A WAR IS ABOUT TO ERUPT IN ISRAEL—AND once again, New Yorkers are to blame. This time, however, it's a war for the culinary soul of the nation, and it's being waged by Gary Heller, a former assistant principal from Brooklyn who moved to Jerusalem two years ago and began hawking New York's own H&H bagels. Until then, bagels (despite what one might think) had failed to conquer the promised land. But now his first major battle is over: He is just closing a deal with an Israeli supermarket chain to sell packs of H&Hs that have been boiled and three-quarters baked ("We try to avoid saying *half-baked,*" Heller says) in the company's Manhattan plant, then flash-frozen and shipped. Already, people have asked if he'll deliver to the Golan.

"It's the New York water that defines H&H's bagelness," Heller says, eyes gleaming. "I'm an educator. I teach Israelis about bagels. And they've got a lot to learn."

ALISON BUCKHOLTZ

Photographs: top, Steven Freeman (3); bottom, James Wor



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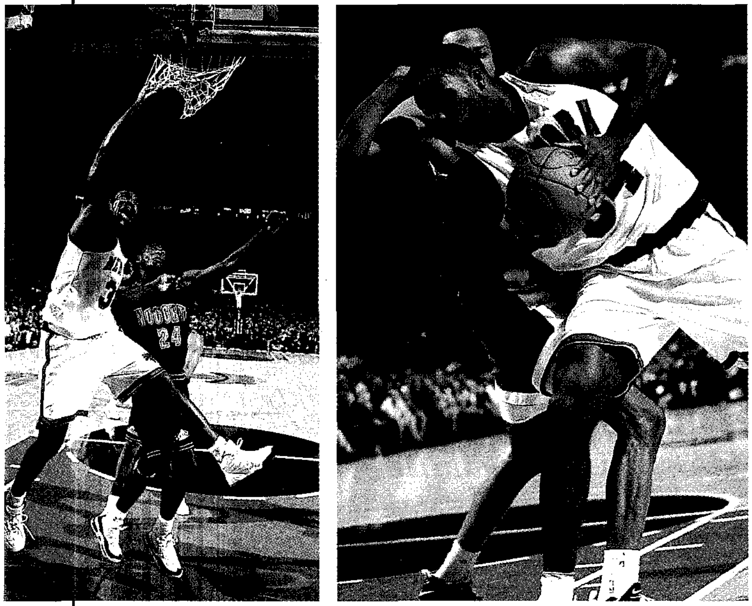
THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

SPORTS

Oak's Blow-By-Blow

Charles Oakley on the art of power-forwarding.

IT FIGURED. OAK WAS IN THE middle of his best game of the season, hitting his funny little jumper from the corner, pulling down bounds left and right, and *wham.* You could hear the smack of Oakley's right hand against Otis Thorpe's jaw up in the (not so) cheap seats.



Hardball: Oakley thinks the NBA doesn't respect his play.

Immediately, the Garden was drenched in glee. Moments earlier, Woody Allen had said he appreciated Oak's appreciation of being the "hard guy." Now Woody was smiling along with everyone else. "That's Oak," people say. Elbow him, you get *a response.* Win or lose, blow a championship or not, at 33, Charles Oakley remains the soul of the Knicks. And everyone had to agree: nineteen points, nine boards, one duke-out—it was an Ür-Oak performance.

It had been a fairly slow week. You see, Oak and I had this deal. I was to call him up before each game and get a scouting report on his man for that night. Later, I'd call again to find out how it went. It would be a chronicle of "the little things," the stuff that doesn't show up in box scores. Oak, the blue-collar-styled owner of Laundromats and car washes in his native Cleveland, does the little things. Crush cameramen while chasing loose balls, throw hip checks in the lane, biff, bam, boom—the little things. Plus, Oak's been around. (Name the Knicks' power forward before he got here in 1988. Spencer Haywood? "Bad News" Barnes? Try Sidney Green.) Twelve years in, Oak's played them all, played them hard.

The week's first matchup: at Houston, Oak vs. Bark, a grudge thing. Last season, Oak floored the yappy Barkley (who once said he was insulted to have "the 59-year-old Charles Oakley on me"), which earned him a two-game suspension. "There's a dislike there," notes Oak, adding that there was no way Sir Chuck was getting away with "that shitty little spin move on the baseline." Barkley wound up not playing, which was too bad, Oak says. "I like to dance with him, keep my jab in his face for twelve rounds. Pop, pop. All night."

A few days later, after dispatching the "slow but cute" Christian Laettner of Atlanta, Oakley went against Washington's cocky, talented Chris Webber. Playing Webber, who is "fast in transition, tries to take you off the dribble, has good hands," is strictly "a mind game," Oak says. "He's got a frustration level. Got to body up on him. Once he starts thinking, his rhythm is off." It worked. Frustrated, Webber was held to

(continued on page 22)

NICE JEWISH BOY SEEKS HOT-BLOODED JEWISH GIRL FOR LOVE IN COLDER CLIMES PART VI

● Now that Jay Ramras, the Alaskan restaurateur seeking a Jewish bride, has become a veteran of the New York dating scene (total dates: 40), we've compiled the key points in his accelerated version of *The Rules:*

● Don't make more than four dates in one day—and nothing earlier than 6:30 A.M.

● A first date is *not* too soon to discuss a woman's willingness to move to Alaska.

● Don't experiment: Pick your lucky spot, and stick with it. (Jay's is Baci, where he's taken seven dates.)

● Always bring your date a gift. Occasionally offer to name one of your restaurants after her.

● Go that extra mile. Jay is falling for a corporate-party planner "with this great crackly laugh" who, when asked if she'd move to Alaska, said "not no." So he's volunteered to serve as her assistant over the holidays. He starts next week.

FASHION

Home Shopping for Those Who Undress to Impress

WHEN UTE SCHWEMMER VISITS NEW YORK DOLLS, OR ANY OF A handful of other strip clubs where she's a well-known backstage presence, she brings a suitcase filled with tight, slippery clothes of her own design and heads downstairs to the dressing room. If it's a good night—if the dancers are in a decent mood or feeling flush—they'll wiggle into her dresses and twirl around in front of the mirror, checking to see whether the sheer panel dips low enough or the slit rises high enough. "Some of this stuff is really hideous," admits Schwemmer. "But it looks good on the girls." In a single evening, she can clear as much as $600.

But her late-night door-to-strip-club-door odyssey is about to end: Schwemmer, 33, is moving her business to mail order. Last week, the printer delivered 12,000 of the Floodline apparel company's first catalogues—fifteen glossy pages, with lots of busty dancers modeling clingy cutaway dresses that have names like "ultra mesh zone" and "diamond girl." The one-size-fits-all, slip-on-slip-off numbers, which range in price from $45 to $149, will now be available to doctors as well as to dancers, with no more effort than a toll-free phone call—that is, if she can just figure out how to get the catalogues into the right hands. "I mailed out 2,000 to strip clubs around the nation. More will be sold through catalogues of catalogues," she says. "Other than that, I'm waiting for any brilliant ideas."

As she tries to expand her client base, the girls in the strip-club dressing rooms remain loyal. "If you look good, you feel good. If you feel good, it shows. That's when you make money," says Vanessa Hannick, 23, a dancer at New York Dolls and a Floodline devotee. "You have to be in a good mood to deal with these losers." RONA MARECH

Photographs: top, George Kalinsky/Major League Graphics (
bottom, Manny KSK Visuals, courtesy The Floodli

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Oakley *continued from page 20*

five-of-seventeen shooting by Oak. "Webber's a broad," Oakley was heard to chortle.

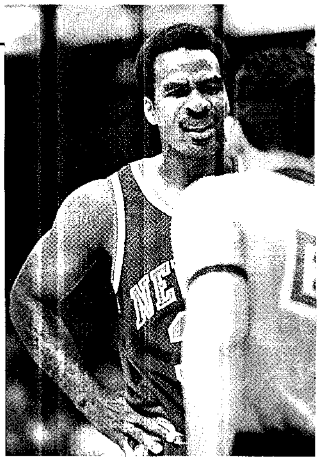
Back at the Garden, before the Thorpe tiff, Oak was subdued. Fierce on the court, he can seem almost melancholy off it. People moan about Patrick Ewing's closing window of championship opportunity, but what about Oak's? He was with Jordan at the beginning in Chicago; he could have five rings now, too. "I didn't trade myself," Oak says. "I don't think about it."

Oak is familiar with the 35-year-old Otis Thorpe, now of the Vancouver Grizzlies. In the 1994 championship series, the closest Oak has ever come to winning, Thorpe played for Houston. They banged for seven games. "I play O.T. straight up; they don't run no plays for him anyways," says Oak with a grudging kinship. The Knicks don't run any plays for him either.

Early in the game, he stared down the Grizzlies' young star, Shareef Abdur-Rahim, so an elbow in the chest from Thorpe should have been no surprise. But Oak struck back. Later, in the locker room, he is informed that Blue Edwards of the Grizzlies has called him "the dirtiest player in the league."

"Screw Blue Edwards," Oak says. "This is what the league has come to—no one wants to be touched."

As it was, Oak got suspended (the third time in three years) and missed the next game, in Detroit. He offers a preview of a night off: "Practice with the team, travel with the team, go to the hotel, lie down on the bed, watch the game on TV, and root. Root hard." MARK JACOBSON


The veteran Oakley likes to bully the officials too.

THE SCENE

Tangy

Text by Vanessa Grigoriadis

Photographs by Patrick McMullan

HIS SILVER CHOPSTICKS poised above a platter of caviar, David Tang recalled darker times. "The Chinese came to New York 150 years ago, and we weren't treated so well," he said. "But tonight would make my ancestors spin in their graves." He may very well have been right. The occasion for the fête was Tang's New York retail debut, but his guests were carrying on as if it were a kind of full-costume Adventure in Asialand. • Winston Churchill III, dressed in a Mao suit, chatted with Kenneth Jay Lane, who was wearing a silk cheongsam. ("My God, are those men wearing dresses?" Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein of Austria asked, taken aback by the improbable sight.) Blaine Trump, out of costume but very much in the spirit, chirped, "It's fun to be Oriental." But not everyone was playing along. "I'll put some chopsticks in my hair, but that's as far as I go," insisted Deborah Norville. • Offering the wisdom of the ages, Kaity Tong's mother was preaching a different kind of restraint. "I'm the seventy-sixth generation of Confucius," she said. "Remember, modesty is always the best policy."

At Tavern on the Green, Phoebe Cates and Kevin Kline following the opening of *Ivanov*.

Albert Watson at the reopening of H. Stern's Fifth Avenue store.

At Cartier's book party for *Cartier: Untamed*, Kevyn Aucoin and Lisa Marie Presley.

Richard and Lauren duPont attending Tocca Beauty's masquerade ball.

David Tang and Sarah, the Duchess of York, celebrate the opening of Shanghai Tang at the Paris Theater.

Benicio del Toro with Olatz and Julian Schnabel for the publication of Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Holy Smoke*.

At Fred's at Barneys, Paul Rudnick and Kate Clinton celebrate *Out* magazine's *Out* 100 Awards.

Photograph by William Sallaz/Duo

Larry King.

Alive.

HIRSCHFELD 3

Los Angeles. September. Larry King is in the middle of planning a wedding. It hits him. A feeling which feels exactly like a heart attack.

And he knows what a heart attack feels like; ten years ago, he had one. Back then, Dr. David Blumenthal and Dr. Wayne Isom at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center saved his life. That's why Larry King wanted to get back to New York fast.

He and his new wife (they got married in the CCU in Los Angeles) flew medevac 3000 miles to New York. There, Dr. Isom stood by as Dr. Alex Shaknovich performed an angioplasty.

A day later Larry King was back on his feet. A week later he was back on TV. Now, Larry King says he feels the best ever. In gratitude for getting back his good health, he's created the Larry King Heart Foundation to help others receive the quality care he did.

You can have a connection to The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. Just call **1-888-NY-CORNELL** for a physician referral.

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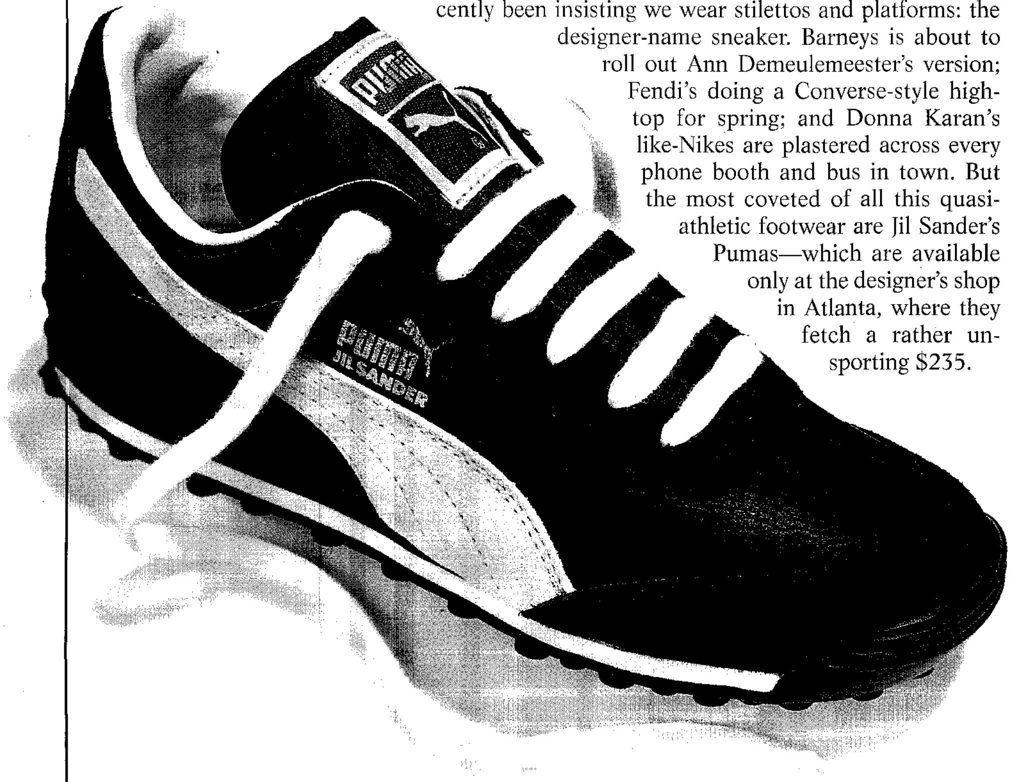
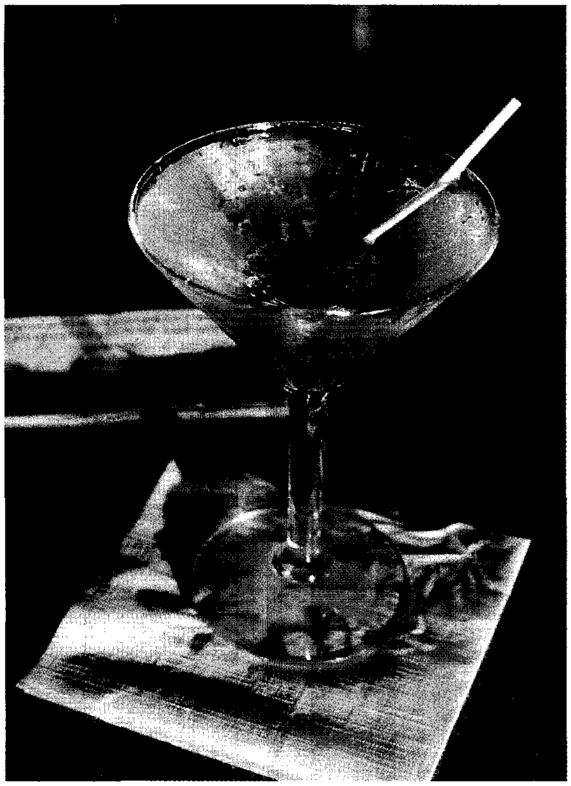
GOTHAM STYLE

EDITED BY DANY LEVY

Down at the Heel



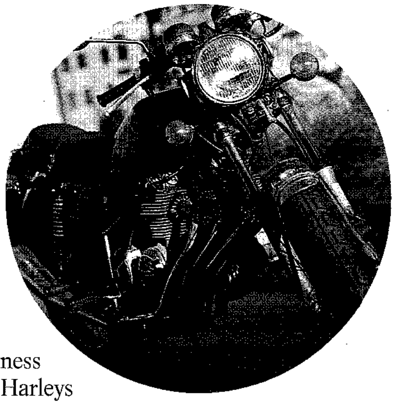
Consider it a giant mea culpa from a fashion industry that's recently been insisting we wear stilettos and platforms: the designer-name sneaker. Barneys is about to roll out Ann Demeulemeester's version; Fendi's doing a Converse-style high-top for spring; and Donna Karan's like-Nikes are plastered across every phone booth and bus in town. But the most coveted of all this quasi-athletic footwear are Jil Sander's Pumas—which are available only at the designer's shop in Atlanta, where they fetch a rather unsporting $235.



Drinking Pop

As cocktail culture wheezes back into retirement, bartenders are having to work harder and harder to draw attention to their craft. Marketing to Lolitas and *Kojak* fans alike, Brett Gillen, who tends at the Grange Hall, recently introduced the Savalas (a Blow Pop in top-shelf vodka) as well as the Savalas Royale (in champagne), the Desert Savalas (in a salted margarita), and even the Sauvignon Savalas.

Re-Cycles



It wasn't long ago that an old small-engine Honda motorcycle had the resale value of an eight-track tape player. Known for reliability and low cost, these bikes seemed a bit bland compared with the rugged rebelliousness of bigger breeds. Lately, however, as Harleys have become standard-issue toys for investment bankers and ad execs, the downscale simplicity of the Super Sport (above) and other small Japanese motorcycles from the seventies has suddenly proven irresistible. "I picked mine up for a couple hundred dollars," says Jennifer DiJoseph, who works at Team Obsolete, a vintage-motorcycle-racing group in Brooklyn. "At first, people thought it was kind of dorky, but then—when it started every time I got on it—they were like, 'How much do you want for it?' " NORMAN VANAMEE

BODY TYPE

White Light

● After revolutionizing the world of radical surgery (to say nothing of Pink Floyd shows), lasers have, over the past few years, become standard-issue weapons in elective skin treatments such as the removal of body hair, acne scars, or obsolete tattoos. Now laser technology enters the service of cosmetic dentistry. The two-and-a-half-hour treatment, which uses the superfocused beam to activate a hydrogen-peroxide solution, is FDA-approved but not yet American Dental Association–endorsed. And practitioners claim it's not painful (though it can be uncomfortable if the solution gets on the patient's gums). All the same, it may seem like a long way to go for a whiter shade of pale, but the more popular bleach-at-home method—which requires one to wear a goo-filled bite plate for several hours a night, two weeks at a clip—is no treat, either. "It's worth it," swears one satisfied laser patient, "and the time just flies compared to schlepping that tray around in your mouth." And according to Dr. Theodore Aaronson, who performs the procedure for a mere $1,400, it may pave the way to more significant dental applications, such as routine use during cleanings to "lase fluoride onto teeth." Rinse and spit, Floyd fans. KATE COYNE

Photographs: clockwise from top, Steve Wisbauer; Evan Kafka; Kristine Lars

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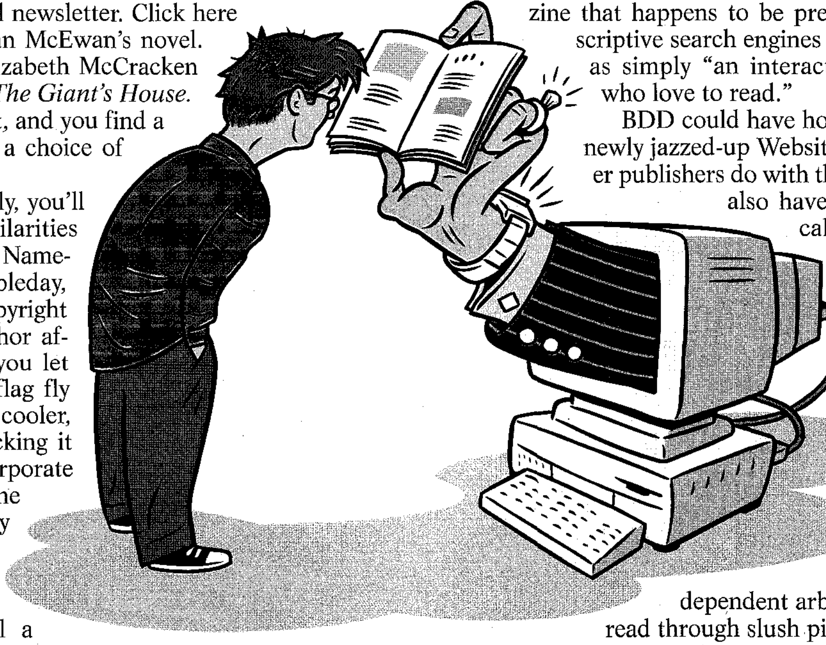
NEW MEDIA JAMES PONIEWOZIK

The Big Shill

When is a literary magazine not a literary magazine? When it's a classy-looking Webzine fronting for a major publishing conglomerate.

WHEN THE SELF-STYLED LITERARY MAGAZINE *Bold Type* (www.bookwire.com/boldtype) was launched on the Web last spring, it called on readers to take it to the streets in decidedly low-tech fashion. "We want you to be subversive," read its inaugural editor's column. "Print out interesting essays and leave them in cafés and on the subway. . . . Post provocative short stories above the copier in your office."

Any revolutionary heeding this call would have found plenty of highbrow ammunition: Running themed monthly issues à la *Granta* ("Death," "Nature," "Icons"), *Bold Type* is packed with literary heavyweights and *wunderkinder* from Margaret Atwood to Jonathan Lethem, along with plenty of technological bells and whistles, including bulletin boards, audio clips, and an e-mail newsletter. Click here for a preview of Ian McEwan's novel. Click here, and Elizabeth McCracken reads to you from *The Giant's House.* Click on an excerpt, and you find a convenient link to a choice of online booksellers.



If you look closely, you'll notice a few similarities among the choices. Namely, Bantam, Doubleday, and Dell in the copyright information of author after author. For if you let *Bold Type*'s freak flag fly above the water cooler, you are in fact sticking it to the Man with corporate samizdat from the Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group. As good a read as *Bold Type* is, it is above all a primer on how the postmodern merry pranksters of business can use new media to subvert the boundaries between content and advertising, between being edified and being sold.

BDD makes no secret of its relationship to *Bold Type.* Not, that is, if you define *secret* and *relationship* generously. A tag line at the bottom of the home page says *Bold Type* is brought to you by BDD and BookWire (www.bookwire.com)—the publishing megasite that also hosts the online homes of *Publishers Weekly*, the *Hungry Mind Review*, and public radio's "Selected Shorts." Is that caveat enough for the typical consumer? Print literary magazines have donors and advertisers, and some, like *Quarterly* (originally published by Random House), have even been published by commercial houses while taking open submissions. When everything from point guards to public toilets has corporate underwriting, it seems a stretch to expect readers to translate "brought to you by BDD" to "devoted exclusively to BDD authors." *Bold Type* took heat on its own bulletin board from W.W. Norton Webmaster Dan Saffer for mentioning BDD's role only on an obscure masthead page. In his online rebuttal, *Bold Type* editor Larry Weissman argued that his publication "can hardly be called advertising. Marketing, sure.

"*Bold Type* is an online literary magazine dedicated to promoting quality literature, albeit BDD literature. . . . It was created to bring some great writers to a new audience in a creative way." Well, yes: That's what advertising—sorry, marketing—does. But *Bold Type*'s visitors come to the site—which looks for all the world like any high-gloss Webzine—directly through BookWire, which mentions BDD not at all. *Bold Type*'s advertising omits the "sponsor" altogether. *Bold Type*'s press clips tend to describe the site uncritically as a magazine that happens to be presented by BDD. And descriptive search engines like Yahoo! bill *Bold Type* as simply "an interactive magazine for people who love to read."

BDD could have hosted *Bold Type* at its own, newly jazzed-up Website (www.bdd.com), as other publishers do with their literary 'zines. It could also have honestly and flatteringly called *Bold Type* "The Best New Writing From Bantam Doubleday Dell," say—after the fashion of Random House's *At Random*. But "online literary magazine" is a useful designation precisely because of its offline associations. Offline, a literary magazine is *The Paris Review*, *Grand Street*, *Witness*—an independent arbiter of taste whose editors read through slush piles.

Buying into the gambit, the *Times* plugs the site as "a new online literary magazine" from BDD and BookWire, adding: "The magazine joins a small but growing number of online literary sites," including *Salon*, *Alt-X*, and *Mississippi Review*. Such fawning no doubt owes in part to old-fashioned press-release credulity, but it also manifests a special blindness that I'll call Web goggles. The prints hardly know what to make of new media and their hybrids—do you read this thing? play it? smoke it?—and they have resolved the conundrum largely by treating everything that comes down the T1 line as some form of hipster entertainment unless someone files charges against it. Even a print magazine devoted to Websites falls in line: A review in the December issue of *The Web*—under the "Literary Magazines" rubric—raves, "This monthly literary e-rag regularly publishes work from some of the literary establish-

Illustration by Steve Wacksman.

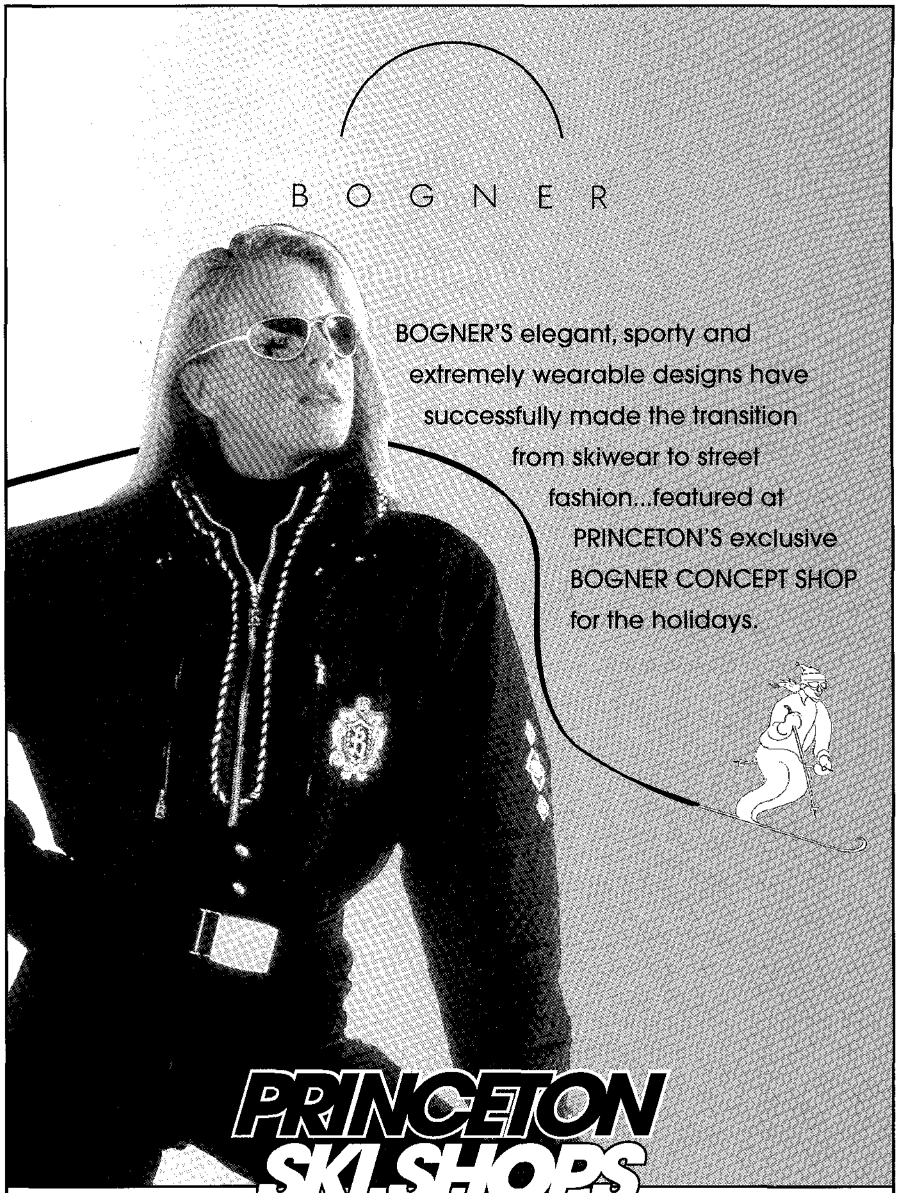
ment's hottest, hippest names . . . put together with exquisite taste, turning what could have been a corporate shill into an excellent literary resource."

In fact, *Bold Type* is actually one cool *catalogue,* the online equivalent of a Barnes and Noble try-before-you-buy playground. But when you park yourself in a chair at B&N, you know the baksheesh—the unrestricted reading, the clean johns—is a means to an end. You know you're in a store. Online, who's to say what a store is, or a magazine? Who's to say if there's a difference? It's a word game suited to word merchants: The Web itself is a literary trope on which we impose concepts like *home* and *page*. In this metaphoric empire of air quotes, it's easy to incrementally nudge the porous wall between business and editorial and call it creativity.

And *Bold Type* is hardly nudging alone. Among the better-known Web magazines, *Salon* (for which I write regularly), for example, runs book and music reviews with buy-this-title links to Borders, the review section's sponsor. Microsoft's *Slate* recently placed advertising for software not as separate "banners"—the usual location of ads on a Website—but in the table of contents, cheek-by-jowl with Michael Kinsley and Norman Ornstein.

Indeed, if the Web is ripe for promotional "magazines," it also allows businesses to insinuate themselves seamlessly into existing editorial space. Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com both offer Web publications percentages of purchases by customers who click from a review to the seller's site: Among Amazon's "Associates" and B&N's "Charter Affiliates" are the Los Angeles *Times,* Time Warner's *Pathfinder,* the New York *Times, The Atlantic Monthly, Upside* magazine, and *USA Today*. So an increasing number of online magazines and newspapers earn commissions (as much as 15 percent) every time someone reads a review and buys the book.

Every once in a while, someone retells that knee-slapper about big business's fearing chaos: Witness the starry-eyed Websbyterians who hold that the Web sweeps aside old-media gatekeepers and empowers the little guy to bust traditional genres. But who says he gets to do all the busting? Sure, maybe some wild-eyed poet with a barbaric yawp and a copy of Photoshop will redefine the literary magazine for millennium 3.0, but it could also be the publishing Death Stars with megamarketing budgets doing the redefining. My money, frankly, is on theirs. ▬



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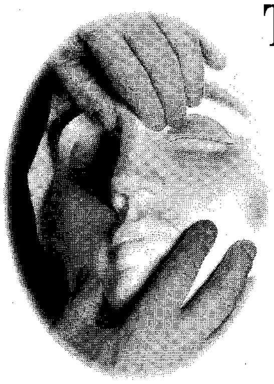

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CITYSCAPE KARRIE JACOBS

Acquired Taste

Given half a chance, Trump would happily redo the world in marble and mirrored glass. But to build in the city these days, he's mastered a new conciliatory style.

UNLESS YOU COUNT THE REVELATION THAT DONALD Trump is apprehensive about germs and will not eat bread after shaking a stranger's hand, there are few surprises in *Trump: The Art of the Comeback* (Times Books). Mostly, it is a log of the developer's commercial conquests: the estate in Palm Beach built by Marjorie Merriweather Post ("My battle for Mar-a-Lago was brutal and endless. . . ."), the Miss Universe Pageant (". . . it's about fun; and it's about beauty, the ultimate beauty—that of a woman"), and 40 Wall Street ("Once I set my sights on it, I knew it would be mine").

In all of this, Trump tries desperately to tell us something new, but it doesn't add up to much. Not as much, in any case, as you can learn from reading his architecture.

Trump has traditionally used his buildings as a means of self-expression, and in the process, made himself an easy target. The blush-wine-colored Italian marble that lines the atrium of Trump Tower, the mirrors on the ceiling of the Grand Hyatt lobby, the bronze elevator doors in the halls of 40 Wall Street: What he expresses with his stylistic flourishes, again and again, is pleasure in an opulence untempered by the tasteful niceties that allow New Yorkers to be comfortable with excess. The problem with Trump isn't that his buildings celebrate greed—New Yorkers are used to that—it's that he's never learned how to disguise it.

Until now, that is.

At the age of 51, Trump has begun to grow up. In the half-dozen projects he's developing around town, there is evidence—sometimes slight—that he is learning to use style as other developers do, to make their buildings fit cozily into both the urban environment and the urban psyche. True, he still specializes in unalloyed self-interest and will employ reflective surfaces when he can. But he's also changed his strategies and shown himself to be adaptable in ways that make him less fun to hate. He has learned what most developers already knew: To get a project approved in this town, you have to play the context game.

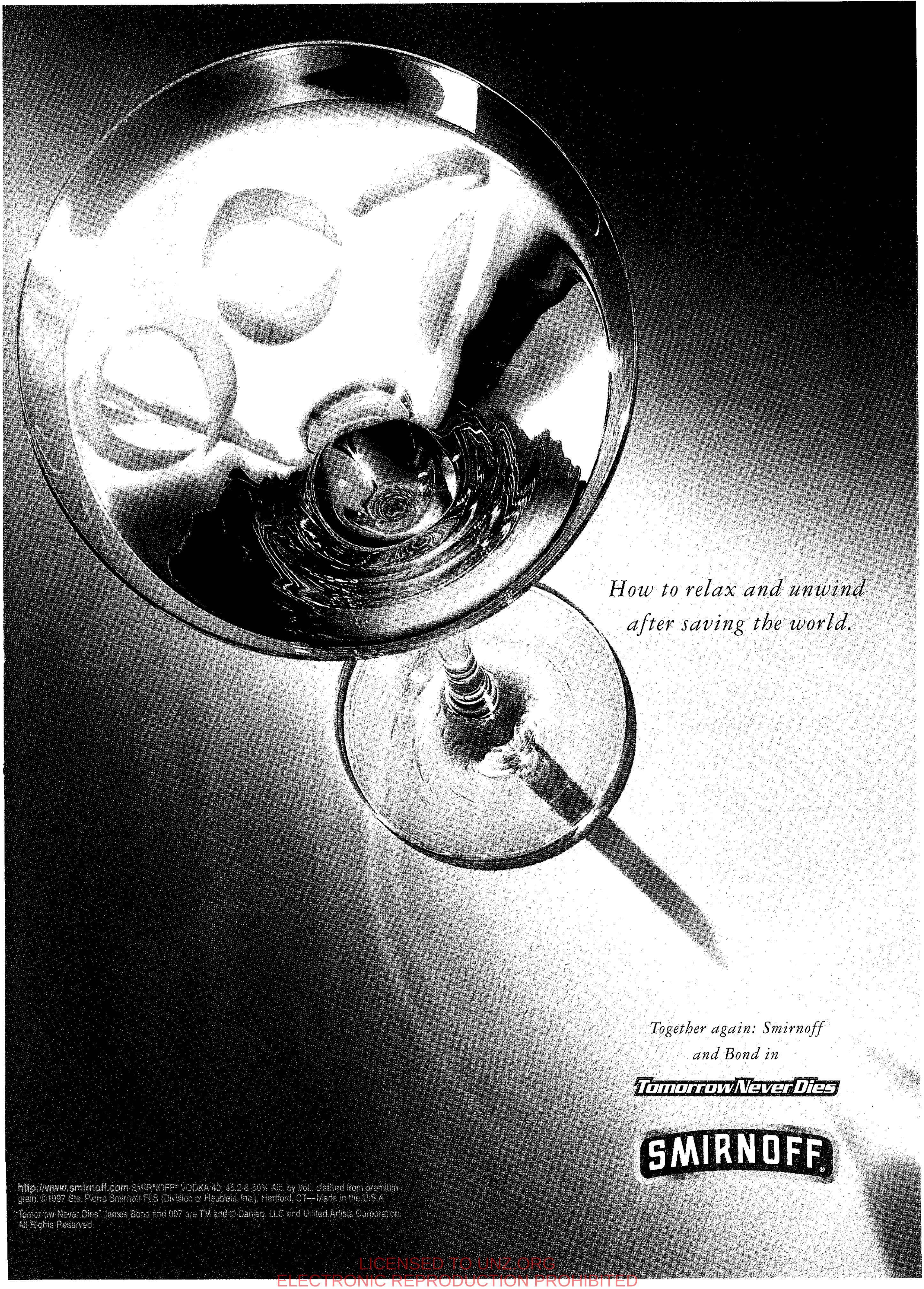
OFTEN, DEVELOPERS LIKE TO WORK WITH AN ARCHITECT WHO WILL educate them in matters of taste. Not Trump. Early on, he found a kindred spirit in architect Der Scutt, whom he hired for his first Manhattan coup, the transformation of the old Commodore Hotel, adjacent to Grand Central Station, into the Grand Hyatt (completed in 1980). In his 1987 book, *Trump: The Art of the Deal,* the developer recalls, "I was convinced that half the reason the Commodore was dying was because it looked so gloomy and dark and dingy. My idea, from the beginning, was to build a new skin directly over the brick—bronze if it could be done economically, or glass. I wanted a sleek, contemporary look, something with sparkle and excitement that would make people stop and take notice."

An aesthetic was born. After the opening of the Grand Hyatt, which remains, easily, the shiniest hotel in New York, Trump moved on to Trump Tower. Designed by Scutt and completed in 1983, it looks more like *Dallas,* the TV show, than New York, the city. To walk off the streets of midtown Manhattan and into this glistening pink orifice decorated with an 80-foot-high marble waterfall and lined with bronze display cases, each topped with a capital-letter *T,* is to take a trip back in time, back to the Reagan years. "It's larger than life," Trump has noted, "and walking through it is a transporting experience, almost as if you're in a wonderland."

In his own way, Trump is a classicist, one for whom style never changes. In the newly renovated lobby of 40 Wall Street, another collaborative effort between Trump and Scutt, it is 1983 all over again. The entrance to the 1929 skyscraper is done in a peach-toned marble that looks a great deal like the Italian Breccia Perniche used in Trump Tower, but it's not. "We took the whole mountain top," says Scutt, referring to the earlier building. "You can't get any more." The new stone, Breccia Ohniciata, comes from a neighboring quarry.

The lobby of 40 Wall may be a throwback, but Trump's other recent projects suggest that the developer has

Illustration by Eric White.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changed his ways. Just look at the Trump International Hotel and Tower, known in its previous life as the Gulf + Western building. The former office tower was one of Columbus Circle's architectural misfits, and who can say how atrocious it might have become had it been reclad in the glittery gold that Trump originally called for? Fortunately, a relatively subdued bronze was substituted for the glitter, a move allegedly influenced by the feng shui master Pun Yin, who suggested that the façade be darker to better reflect the clouds.

A relatively minor concession, granted, but still a concession. Trump was learning the art of compromise, and he would get better at it. Consider: Early this year, when it was announced that Trump, backed by an Australian insurance company, would remake the St. Moritz hotel on Central Park South into luxury condominiums, the New York *Times* reported it would be "sheathed in a skin of bronze tinted glass. A drawing shows a pleated glass top; its tentative name: Trump Pinnacle." The news prompted cries of outrage and talk of landmarking Central Park South. But Trump quickly hired Robert A. M. Stern, an architect renowned for designing buildings that immediately look like they belong, to do a makeover in limestone and masonry that will be, as a Trump Organization executive put it, "contextual to the nth degree." Trump also turned to Stern to design his submission to the Coliseum-site competition. Among the nine proposals, the Trump/Stern tower—basically a tall, skinny version of a prewar apartment building—is notable for its restraint.

But the most dramatic expression of Trump's re-education can be found at Riverside South, the 75-acre development along the Hudson, where the developer realized that making peace with the civic and neighborhood groups who opposed the project would get buildings into the ground faster than waging war. Trump scrapped Television City, his overblown eighties plan that featured the world's tallest building as centerpiece, and adopted a more modest scheme that began as the *civic alternative.* After years of tense and hotly contested negotiations, Trump began construction several months ago on a string of apartment towers that are neither as tall as the developer would like them to be nor as short as the neighbors would prefer. But what nearly everybody seems reasonably pleased with is how they look. The overall plan for the sixteen buildings was done by Skidmore

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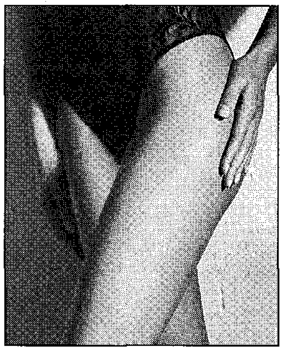

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Owings & Merrill, who essentially drew an updated version of Central Park West in which oversized versions of such landmarks as the San Remo and Majestic are strung along the Hudson.

Designed by architects Philip Johnson and Costas Kondylis, the buildings now under construction are clad in humble, utilitarian brown brick. If you don't mind contemporary architecture that has been hijacked by designers infatuated with the styles of the past, Donald Trump's most ambitious development ever is not so bad. Who knows? In time, Trump himself may come to appreciate its earth tones and matte surfaces. (Of course, no story about New York real estate can have an entirely happy ending. The waterfront park that was the centerpiece of the compromise has been jeopardized by the disinclination of West Side congressman Jerry Nadler and the Giuliani and Pataki administrations to spend $200 million on moving the West Side Highway viaduct.)

OH, AND HAVE YOU MET DONALD TRUMP, preservationist? Admittedly, he is, at last report, still unrepentant about destroying the Art Deco friezes that once graced the Bonwit Teller store, and he did decorate the lobby of 40 Wall in a way that is sensitive to no one's history other than his own. Nonetheless, he casts himself as the selfless protector of his historic financial-district skyscraper. In *The Art of the Comeback,* Trump reports that the group of Hong Kong investors that had purchased 40 Wall in the early nineties was planning on gutting the lower floors to make an atrium inspired by . . . Trump Tower. Trump, who eventually bought the building from the Hong Kong consortium for $1 million, scrapped the atrium idea and hopes to get 40 Wall designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, less for the glory, presumably, than for the tax break. Trump the preservationist has also decided against smothering the pyramid atop the building in gold leaf, and will let it remain plain old copper-green.

But don't worry. We'll still have The Donald to kick around. His latest endeavor sounds very much like the old Trump. He's supposedly building a luxury apartment tower between 47th and 48th Streets, opposite the U.N., that will be a minimum of 60 stories tall. If his backer, the industrial firm Daewoo, doesn't go down with the rest of the Korean economy, Trump may erect something so egregious that we'll love to hate him for decades to come.

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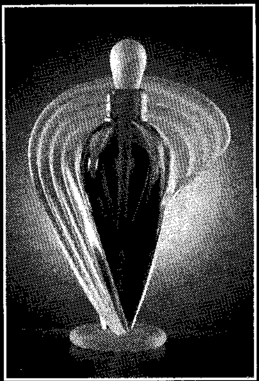

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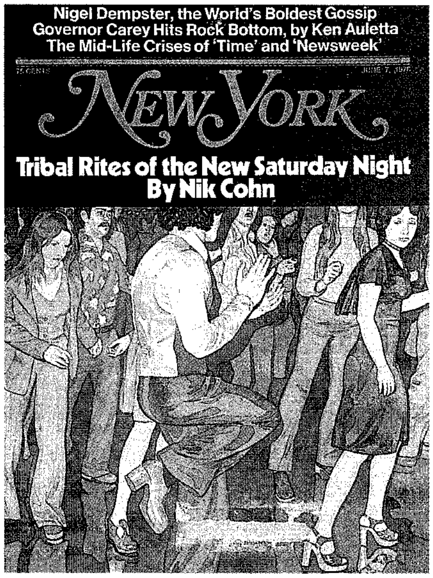
How a guy in red flared pants and a
a neon sign in Bay Ridge set the who



Nigel Dempster, the World's Boldest Gossip
Governor Carey Hits Rock Bottom, by Ken Auletta
The Mid-Life Crises of 'Time' and 'Newsweek'

New York

Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night
By Nik Cohn

IT WAS A BRUTAL NIGHT FOR TIME travel. Torrential rainstorms lashed the roads, and the traffic on the LIE was barely crawling. Still, I was in no great rush. It was more than twenty years since I'd last journeyed towards 2001 Odyssey, the Bay Ridge disco in which I had set the story that led to *Saturday Night Fever*. A half-hour delay could hardly hurt. ■ To mark the twentieth anniversary of the film's opening, WKTU was throwing a massive celebration at the club. The premises had been restored to their original disco glory, complete with mirror ball and floor lights; John Travolta look-alike contests had been held at Burger Kings all over Brooklyn; and the Bee Gees were scheduled to perform. ■ A crowd of 4,000 was expected, and I was among the invitees. "It's the seventies all over," a publicity person had told me. So here I sat, snug and dry behind the tinted windows of a chauffeured Town Car that might almost pass for a limo, inching through the storm. Back to the scene of the crime.

NIGHT'S

ANG

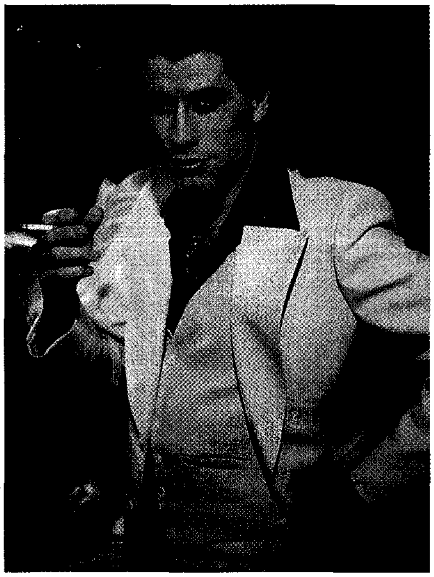
t black shirt standing in the light of orld in motion.

BY NIK COHN

In the winter of 1975, when I made my first trip to Bay Ridge, I had been in America for just a few months. I was a contributing editor at *New York,* where I wrote a rock column. But the music business, by this time, no longer excited me. I'd been in London during the sixties; by comparison, these seemed withered days. Rock, which had once been an explosion, had become just another industry, a matter of churning out product.

What I needed, primarily, was an energy fix—the kind of rage and obsession that had drawn me to write about rock in the first place. Clearly, it wasn't to be found at record-company parties, or in the Establishment music press. So I hit the streets.

Up in Rockland County, I stumbled across a disco dancer named Tu Sweet. He was entered in the Great American Dance Contest, and he was dazzling. He was also black, which meant that he was forced to share first prize, an injustice so rank that even his rival competitors jeered. But he took the setback in stride. "That's why they named me Tu Sweet," he told me when I cornered him. "It means 'right on' in French, and that's the way I am."



Later on, when we got back to Manhattan, he took me to a dance club called Othello, near Madison Square Garden. There, fueled by a nonstop supply of Grand Marnier–and–Cokes, he proceeded to give me a grounding in Disco 101.

According to Tu Sweet, the craze had started in black gay clubs, then progressed to straight blacks and gay whites and from there to mass consumption—Latinos in the Bronx, West Indians on Staten Island, and, yes, Italians in Brooklyn.

Of these, he knew the Italians best. Some of them went in for the same dance contests as himself, and though he found their style in general too crude, a little too blatant, he liked their passion. "Some of those guys, they have no lives," he said, staring into his Grand Marnier–and–Coke. "Dancing's all they got."

For me, this was an automatic hook. Growing up in Northern Ireland, and later living in England, I'd always thought of teen style in terms of class. Rock and roll, at least the kind that mattered to me, attained its greatest power when have-nots went on the rampage. *Dancing's all they got.* It sounded to me like a rallying cry.

When I proposed the story to Clay Felker, then editor of *New York,* his response was lukewarm at best. At night, over dinner at Elaine's, he conducted a flash poll, with discouraging results. No one present knew anything of disco, Felker reported back, and no one gave a damn, either.

Still, he let me go ahead. On an icy, storm-wracked Saturday night in early December, Tu Sweet commandeered a gypsy cab, and we sallied forth for Brooklyn. There was this little club out in

The Kobal Collection

Bay Ridge, 2001 Odyssey, where he'd been a few times. Most blacks were not welcome there, but Tu Sweet wasn't most blacks. Once he'd got out on the dance floor and showed off his moves, even the racial hard core had given him grudging credit. "They still don't like me," he admitted. "But they're not about to demise me."

Leaving Manhattan, he knew exactly where he was headed. Many hours later, he still did. By that time, we had trawled all of Bay Ridge, Borough Park, and Bensonhurst, and most of Sheepshead Bay to boot. The gypsy cab was unheated, ice layered the windshield, and the engine had started to grumble as loudly as me. But Tu Sweet refused to admit defeat. "It's right around this corner," he announced, for perhaps the twentieth time. This time, by some fluke, he proved correct.

We were in a dead land. There were auto shops, locked and barred; transmission specialists; alignment centers. There was the Crazy Country Club, which advertised "warm beer and lousy food." And then there was, at the far end of a deserted block, a small patch of red neon light.

When we pulled up outside the club, a drunken brawl was in progress. Just as I opened my side door, one of the brawlers emerged from the pack, reeled over toward the gutter, and threw up, with fine precision, all over the side of the cab and my trouser legs.

I took it as a sign. Quickly slamming the door, I ordered us back to Manhattan. Tu Sweet, sniffing the blood rage in the air, for once didn't argue. So ended the first chapter.

One image stayed with me, though: a figure in flared crimson pants and a black body shirt, standing in the club doorway, directly under the neon light, and calmly watching the action. There was a certain style about him—an inner force, a hunger, and a sense of his own specialness. He looked, in short, like a star.

> **I keep returning to the figure under the light: All that passion, and no place to let it loose but on the dance floor of a nowhere club.**

I knew that look well. I'd seen one version as a child, in my hometown of Derry, when I came across a teen gang outside a coffee bar and watched one of them, their leader, do tricks with a rubber snake. And again, in London, around 1965, when I turned up one night to see the Who and met a Mod named Chris, just turned 17, who claimed to buy three new suits each week and change his shirt five times a day.

They didn't do much, these faces. Didn't sing or play guitars, and their daytime job, if they had one, was irrelevant. Their whole power—their stardom—was inbuilt.

The following weekend, I went back to 2001 Odyssey with Tu Sweet, and this time we got past the door. I didn't learn much, though. The noise level was deafening, the crush of sweaty bodies suffocating, and none of my attempts at striking up conversations got beyond the first few sentences. I didn't see the figure in the doorway again, and the others I tried talking to were unresponsive. Plus, I made a lousy interviewer. I knew nothing about this world, and it showed. Quite literally, I didn't speak the language.

So I faked it.

I conjured up the story of the figure in the doorway, and named him Vincent. Taking all I knew about the snake charmer in Derry and, more especially, about Chris the Mod in London, I translated them as best I could to Brooklyn. Then I went back to Bay Ridge in daylight and noted the major landmarks. I walked some streets, went into a couple of stores. Studied the clothes, the gestures, the walks. Imagined about how it would feel to burn up, all caged energies, with no outlet but the dance floor and the rituals of Saturday night. Finally, I wrote it all up. And presented it as fact.

There was no excuse for it. At the time, if cornered, I would doubtless have produced some high-flown waffle about Alternative Realities, tried to argue that writing didn't have to be true to be, at some level, real. But, of course, I would have been full of it. I knew the rules of magazine reporting, and I knew that I was breaking them. Bluntly put, I cheated.

Oddly, no one seemed to notice. Or, if they did, they failed to confront me. Clay Felker still showed small enthusiasm for the project, it's true, and if not for James McMullan's illustrations, the piece might never have seen daylight. In the end, though, it struggled into print.

By then it was June, and certain compromises had been reached. My own title, "Another Saturday Night," had become "Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night," and an introductory note was appended, in my name, insisting that every word in the story was gospel truth. On the Monday morning that the article hit the stands, I left my apartment early and didn't return till after lunch. When I got home, the lady I was living with told me that I'd had a mysterious phone call. "Some guy called Rabbi Stigfeld," she said. Suspecting that he was calling to hustle a contribution to Jewish causes, she had stonewalled by telling him that I was asleep in a pool of my own vomit at the foot of the bed and couldn't come to the phone. "I got you off the hook," she told me proudly.

It took a little thought to work out that Rabbi Stigfeld was, in fact, Robert Stigwood, the producer, whom I knew quite well. At that juncture, he was probably best known in rock and theater—he managed the Bee Gees and had produced *Jesus Christ Superstar*—but he had recently branched out into films. When he called me back, he told me that he'd read my Bay Ridge story, and would I care to pop round for tea?

This was unexpected, to put it mildly. Magazine writers, in those gauche days, hadn't yet learned to think of their stories as potential films. When I ambled round to Stigwood's place, however, I found him fat with deals. It turned out that he had recently signed a three-picture deal with John Travolta, who was then best known as Vinnie Barbarino, the dimwitted Sweathog, on TV's *Welcome Back, Kotter.* The first of these was to be *Grease;* and my Saturday-night story, Stigwood felt, was tailor-made for the second.

I didn't argue with the man. I didn't even complain when he served me stale chocolate-chip cookies with my tea. As best I can recall, all I said was, "That sounds feasible."

Shortly afterward, I traveled down to Texas, where I rented a hunter's cabin, way back in the woods near Llano. For the next six weeks, I sat under a spreading shade tree, surrounded by cow chips and flies, pounding out a screenplay about mean streets and discos. I hadn't a clue how to write for films, but dumb ignorance had been my sleeve card all through this enterprise, and there seemed no good reason to change tacks now.

This time, though, I'd overpushed my luck. According to the late Don Simpson, then a Hollywood fledgling, my draft script was quite likely the worst in movie history: "the alpha and omega of turkeys." So I was quietly removed from the firing line, and Norman Wexler, who'd won Oscar nominations for *Serpico* and *Joe,* took over. Bizarrely, I had the nerve to feel wronged.

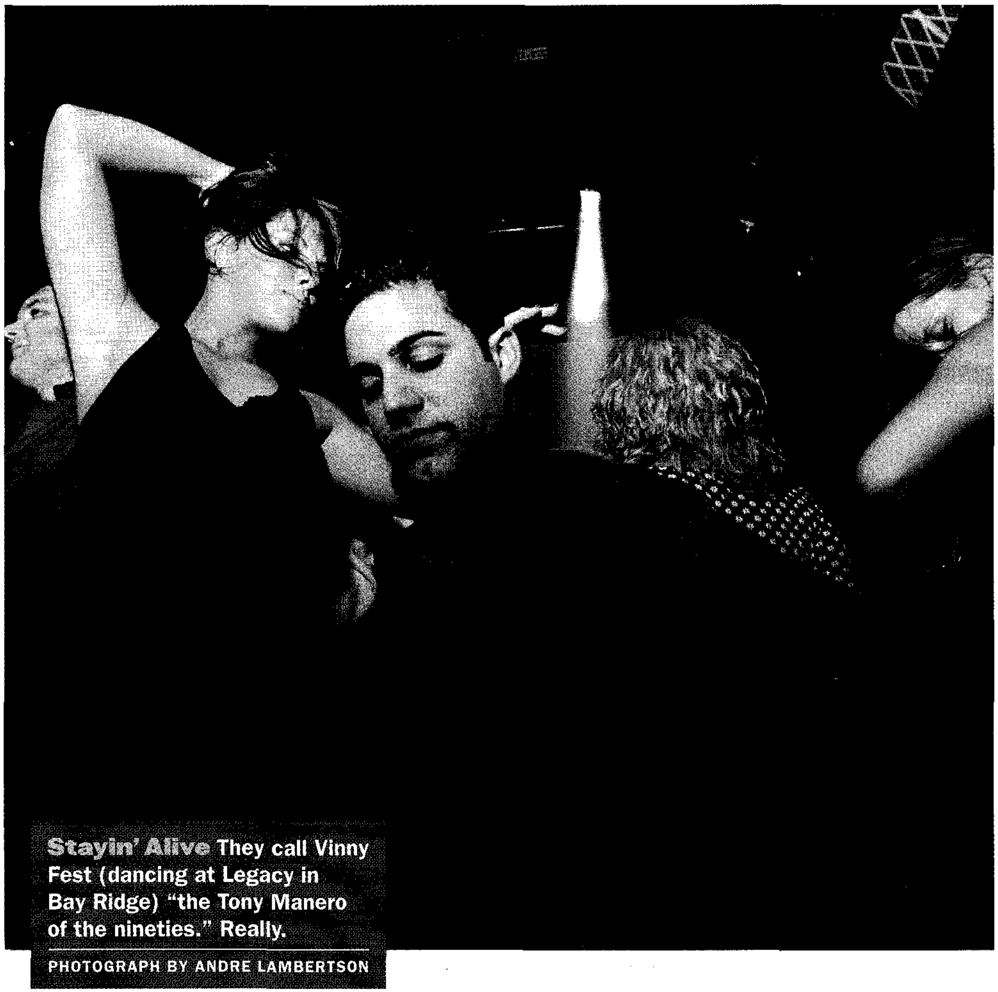
From then on, I lost control of my creation. Or rather, the creation ceased to be mine. *Saturday Night Fever* had its premiere on Pearl Harbor Day, at Grauman's Chinese Theater. A fleet of limousines was laid on to convoy the main protagonists down Hollywood Boulevard and dump them at the feet of their adoring fans. Since my own adoring fan had just tossed a microwave at my head, I went as the date of Yvonne Elliman, who sang "If I Can't Have You" on the film's soundtrack. Exactly as I'd seen it done on countless newsreels, we stepped out into a barrage of flashbulbs while a man with the vow-

(continued on page 96)

THE SOUL OF THE NEW SATURDAY NIGHT

THE NAMES HAVE CHANGED, THE MUSIC IS DIFFERENT (usually), and the clothes are new (kind of), but twenty years after Tony Manero ignited a dance revolution, Saturday night still seduces the feverish young. *New York* dispatched 40 reporters to the far reaches of the city to take the pulse of the night. They uncovered all manner of tribal rituals, from Orthodox couples sipping Coke at the Marriott to dragsters tearing up Fountain Avenue to leashed-and-handcuffed fetishists unwinding at the Vault. And even a guy in Bay Ridge who has a mystical connection to Tony Manero.

EDITED BY MAER ROSHAN



Stayin' Alive They call Vinny Fest (dancing at Legacy in Bay Ridge) "the Tony Manero of the nineties." Really.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE LAMBERTSON

BROOKLYN, 8 P.M.

The Fresh Prince OF BAY RIDGE

VINNY FEST WAS 3 YEARS old when the movie *Saturday Night Fever* came out, but like any other kid from Bensonhurst, he knows every block of the terrain that Tony Manero once stalked. He knows those days are gone. The music has gone electronic, and the clothes have shed a good portion of their petroleum content.

But like any kid from Bensonhurst, Vinny also knows that fundamentally, nothing will ever change: You can still own Saturday night if you've got the walk, the clothes, and, most important, the moves. After all, his friends haven't called him "the Tony Manero of the nineties" for nothing.

"I feel there is definitely some kind of symbolic connection between us," says

"All of a sudden, I just started dancing," he recalls. "I'm serious about this: They were all saying, 'Look, he's dancing like John Travolta.' "

Vinny, 23, who is muscular and compact, and tonight is wearing a red turtleneck sweater, a black leather pea coat, and square-tipped black shoes. "There are major, major connections between me and him. I'm dark; he's dark. I'm a dancer, just like him. " He smiles. "I've even got a cleft in my chin."

In Manhattan, the presumption is that Tony Manero's world vanished with Jimmy Carter, that "disco" exists now only as a campy, retro theme-night for clubs and inevitably involves period Gloria Gaynor music and more than a few trips to East Village vintage stores for poly-blend jackets.

But in fact, in Bay Ridge, disco is staying alive. Not far from the the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, neighborhood kids just old enough to drink still crowd the sidewalks outside places like Spin and Legacy every Saturday night. This is purist disco, boys dressing up to reel in girls, even if the outfits have grown up with the times.

Legacy, formerly Pastel's, formerly Algie's Penthouse, is the world headquarters of the church of Tony Manero. The décor has been steadily updated since its seventies apogee. Gone are the floor lights. In is a blend of suburban pastels, marble tiles, and light woods that evoke California nouvelle cuisine as much as Quaalude-era debauchery. No air quotes are in evidence; as it was for Travolta, dancing is serious business.

Vinny Fest goes by the name of Vincent Aquilino around his parents' house, where he still lives, and around St. Francis College in Brooklyn Heights, where he is completing a degree in English. He became Vinny Fest in eighth grade. "I was into writing graffiti," says Fest, who nowadays wants to move on to novels. "I just like the way Fest sounded. It had a ring to it. It's like my stage name. But it's who I am."

Vinnie caught the fever early. "I was about 3 years old," he says. "I remember a birthday party at one of the neighbors'. She was an older girl, maybe 15. She had all her friends over, and they were playing the song 'Native New Yorker.' All of a sudden, I just started dancing. I'm serious about this: They were all saying, 'Look, he's dancing like John Travolta.' "

As he got older, he started going to nightclubs, battling other dancers on the floor. He mastered hip-hop, "kick" dancing, all forms of street freestyle dancing, and starred in the parks of Brooklyn. He used to break-dance in the halls of St. Mary's elementary school in his parochial-school uniform. "People were saying that Vinny Fest is considered one of the best dancers in Brooklyn. It developed my character, my self-confidence."

Vinny eventually started promoting nightclubs in Brooklyn, and in Manhattan, which he still often refers to as New York. Vinny played a thug in his friend Sal Stabile's gritty independent film about neighborhood life, *Gravesend*. The movie gave him a taste of acting, a career for which he thinks he could be a natural. "When I was younger," Vinnie says, "I was torn. I wanted to be accepted by the in crowd—hanging out with the Bay Parkway Boys, making sure I'm accepted by them as not being a coward. But I never did anything I would regret. I always had the good side of Vinny, who would never get too far into doing bad things."

For Fest, as for Manero, Brooklyn at times felt like a dead end. "At one point," he says, "when I was a senior in high school, I was trying to deny myself of Brooklyn, wanting to get out of it, because I felt like I was being held back. Because I thought everybody would consider someone like myself, with a name like Vinny,

The Lord of the Dance Hall

"It's the oldest nightclub in New York," brags Nick Murdocca, who built his crumbling Bronx discotheque 23 years ago, when the neighborhood was mostly Italian. In the mid-eighties, the demographic became primarily West Indian, so Nick gamely hoisted a Jamaican flag over the gates, imported reggae bands and sound systems, and kept the party going. As soon as you step into Act III, on White Plains Road, a wave of dance-hall music hits you in the chest. Men in designer stocking caps and Kangols stand in repose under the red lights and revolving disco ball. But the floor belongs to two (theoretically) 21-year-old women who identify themselves as Bouncer and Domaine. Bouncer is wearing a silver skirt and knee-high white boots. Domaine is dressed in a camouflage bodysuit, wraparound sunglasses, and a black gossamer shawl. When she raises her arms, it looks like she has wings. This is how the Bronx gets down. Calvin Baker

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC ASNIN

an Italian-American name—it's like you get stereotyped as a guido, someone who's not educated, someone who's not going anywhere in the world. What I wanted to do was move into the city. Go to Manhattan and flourish as the artist that I am. But as I grew older, I said, 'This is what made me the person I am. Brooklyn—it's a part of me. I'll never be ashamed of it. I'll take it with me.' "

Tonight he doesn't have to take it anywhere. Tonight is Saturday, and everything in the world is still right here.

ALEX WILLIAMS

WORLD TRADE CENTER, 8:30 P.M.

LOOKING FOR MISTER GOLDBERG

The Marr[illegible]ing Orthodox Je[illegible]ands to themselv[illegible]and-Pepsi dates [illegible] of the Marriot[illegible]nter.

PHOTOGRA[illegible]LLER

IT'S EIGHT-THIRTY ON SATURday night, the sun has set, the Sabbath is officially over, and Avroham Stern, a 22-year-old yeshiva student from Staten Island who is working as a part-time locksmith until he is ordained as a rabbi next June, is installed at the Greenhouse Lounge at the Marriott World Trade Center. Formally dressed in a broad-brimmed black hat, double-breasted black suit, white shirt, discreetly patterned tie, and black-rimmed glasses, Stern explains why the Greenhouse Lounge is a favorite dating spot for Orthodox Jewish singles: "It's a quiet, relaxing setting. The point of a date is to talk, to get to know each other.

"Nice settings provoke nice conversation," he adds with a wry smile. "I didn't go to the Holocaust Museum tonight for a date, if you know what I mean."

Stern's escort this evening is Leah Weiss, a 21-year-old teacher at a girls' high school in Flatbush. Stern and Weiss have been set up on a *shidduch,* a blind date arranged by a matchmaker. Weiss is attractive but modest, her dark-brown shoulder-length hair brushed off her lightly made-up face, black tailored jacket buttoned up to her collarbone, and floral-print skirt draped around her calves. "The Marriott is a standard place to go on a date because it's closest to Brooklyn," she explains. "I've been here *a lot*. I feel like I'm at home. I've sat in every seat, except next to a boy on a sofa."

A sense of practicality and propriety brings Orthodox Jewish singles to this modern, brightly lit balcony lounge. The soft whoosh of water cascading from the lobby fountain mixes with piped-in classical music. The boys and girls—as young, unmarried Orthodox Jewish men and women call themselves—sit opposite one another in striped velveteen Regency-style chairs set before tiny marble-topped cocktail tables. Making shy conversation, they linger over a single round of Cokes and Sprites, which by night's end are empty, save for the melting ice cubes. "They sit here all night," grumbles one waiter. "We stop serving at 10:30. But they stay. Even after we take away the candles and flowers because we have to go home."

"Many yeshiva boys are learning the Torah by day and in college at night. To shell out $30 to $70 to take a date out for a meal is really, really tough," explains Shani Stein, a 21-year-old student at Brooklyn College. "The alternative is to take a girl out to a really fancy place, like a hotel lounge, where she can get

Taxi Driver

10:30 P.M. "Wanna get high?" Moe Bats is getting ready for work. Bats has been driving a cab in New York for about 30 years, and he needs a little help getting started these days. "This job is too stressful not to get high," he says.

Bats has stories to tell and dreams of spinning them on the big screen. He rattles off names of producers and editors who have happened into his cab. But this networking—he calls it "Internetting"—has its downside. HBO's *Taxicab Confessions*? His idea.

Outside the rock club Tramps, Bats picks up three music-industry types in from Hollywood. They want to go to the Bitter End, a tame frat-boy venue on Bleecker Street. He cheerfully suggests a sex club instead. He wants to know if they like fat women. "They aren't all fat; they're full-figured," he assures the three, "but if you want to get laid and not spend any money, I know a place on Pearl Street."

The passengers try to play it cool, like they're seriously considering spending their one evening in New York boogying in a roomful of oversize women. "No, thank you," one says finally.

"The Bitter End is bullshit," Bats persists as we pull up. "You'll have more fun with the fat girls. They're real appreciative."

"Here's fine."

"Whatever." ▶

Illustration by Michael Sloan

dressed up and feel special. The atmosphere is elegant. The guy doesn't look cheap. You have a nice conversation and it's *acceptable*."

What's unacceptable, according to the Orthodox rules of dating, is to go out to a secluded place where there might be temptation to touch. "A teacher of mine told me that if you touch before you're married, a curse is put on your children. But a blessing is given if you're careful," says Chavie Moskowitz, a 20-year-old Touro College student from Borough Park, who with her straight red hair, chocolate-brown suit, and matching brown suede pumps looks more like a young Wall Street executive than like a God-fearing bride-to-be.

But on this moonlit Saturday night, standing on the outdoor esplanade of the Winter Garden, Chaim Singer, a 24-year-old yeshiva student from Kew Gardens Hills, proposes to Moskowitz, who, bouncing on her toes, gleefully accepts. Instead of embracing her fiancé, she blows him a kiss. "It's pretty tough not touching," she admits. "That's one of the reasons why we get married so soon."

Soon means after three to twelve dates. "Dating is not a mundane thing," says Rochelle Klein, a 21-year-old secretary from Toronto who heard about Yaakov Schwartz from a matchmaker and promptly flew to the Marriott to meet him. "Dating is sacred. The point is to get married." Schwartz, a thin, bearded 22-year-old yeshiva student from Far Rockaway, nervously clasps and unclasps his hands as he says, "Every person I go out with, I think, is maybe my future wife. I'm not comparing girl to girl. The first one I went out with I was hoping would be the one I married. I've gone out with about five girls so far. If you think she might be the one, you go out again. You keep going out till you figure out if this person can help you accomplish your goals in life." Having said that, he looks away from his date and takes a long gulp of Coke. ELIZABETH HAYT

CANARSIE, BROOKLYN, 9 P.M.

The Drag Kings
OF FOUNTAIN AVENUE

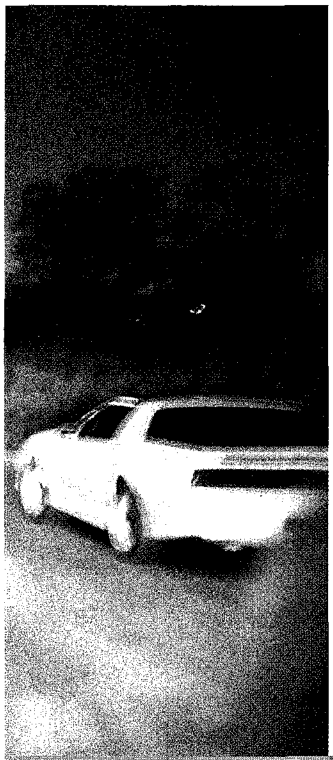
WHAT IF SPIKE LEE AND A. J. Foyt teamed up to remake *American Graffiti* or *Grease*? It would be set in Brooklyn, and the much darker actors would be concerned with just one question: How can I make my car go faster? Welcome to Saturday nights at Fountain Avenue, a weekly drag-racing ritual on the city's edge described by one dreadlocked attendee as "just a bunch of guys coming together to do something illegal." But the laws they break have as much to do with physics and engineering as they do with city ordinances. For on this nearly deserted four-lane access road in Canarsie, the illicit pursuit of speed climaxes for crowds of 40 to 50 in scores of 30-second automotive orgasms.

"This is a fucking mission for us," says Val, a wiry and wired 24-year-old from South Ozone Park. He is a member of Smokin' Joe's Racers, a dozen Trinidadian and Guyanese immigrants from Queens who all look a decade younger than their licenses maintain and who have been racing throughout the city "since forever." A snake tattoo crawls up Val's neck above the collar of his too-big Chaps T-shirt, and he speaks like a possessed preacher delivering a Sunday sermon. "I mean, my wife could be in labor, and it's like, 'Sorry.' " He sucks his teeth and waves his hand. " 'I gotta go race.' "

One end of the unlit drag strip is littered with the shells of stolen cars, the other marked by a bedraggled, bullet-holed sign that announces FUTURE SITE OF GATEWAY ESTATES. Around them, Starrett City, a public-housing project built on the grounds of the old city dump, looms apocalyptically. On this night, the king of the road seems to be a 1995 cherry-red Mustang 5.0 notchback. After it tore up the quarter-mile straightaway at 110 miles per hour, its competitor, a mirror-image white Mustang, didn't even bother to finish the race, pulling up halfway down the track in the hot-rodder's ultimate gesture of surrender. Finished with its torrid run, the red Mustang fishtails to a halt near the spectators.

Emerging from the car is a young man seemingly ripped out of a Tommy Hilfiger ad. He straightens his backward baseball cap, puffs out his chest, and coolly accepts an array of high fives and backslaps. Val and the others from Smokin' Joe's fold their arms against their designer T-shirts, unimpressed, because it is their firm belief that the world's cars can be broken down into two categories: Mazdas and crap.

"Who's next?" cries Sam, a stocky 23-year-old from Crown Heights known throughout the city's racing scene as the Fountain Guy. Sam is the unofficial master



Racing Demon Turbocharged Mazdas and Mustangs burn up the quarter-mile on Fountain Avenue in Brooklyn.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY MUNGER

of ceremonies on Fountain Avenue. He has been a fixture here since 1989, flagging races on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. The Mazda crew holds a small conference and decides to send Balli to the line. The cherubic 21-year-old steps forward and approaches a gold turbocharged Mazda RX7, chin pinned to his chest in an attempt to hide a wide grin.

"Yo, this is boring," shouts one of Balli's backers, pacing back and forth with a quarter held high. "This free shit just ain't happening."

The rest of the onlookers eye the two cars and shake their heads no, until a voice from the back rises: "Let's run it for a bucket of chicken. I'm starving!"

Laughter wanes as the two cars take their positions at the starting line. "That car's fast," someone says, pointing to the Mustang, "but there's no way a V8 can beat a rotary motor." Everyone leans forward and waits for Sam's outstretched arms to fall.

In an explosion of smoke, screeching tires, and burning rubber, the two cars careen violently down the strip in a sort of prolonged precrash shriek. When they hit the middle of the track, side by side at more than 100 mph, the RX7 shoots forward in an unnatural burst of speed that sends everyone's jaw to the pavement.

"Oh, my God!" someone bawls. "They fucked his shit up!"

Balli spins back to the crowd amid raucous approval while the Mustang remains idling at the finish line.

"Ah, he's thinking he should go home," Sam suggests. "Too damned embarrassed."

"He better be getting the chicken," someone adds.

Fountain Avenue has been a hot spot for these unauthorized speed showcases for decades. But it has grown in status recently, since a succession of disastrous crashes and deaths under the Bruckner Expressway in the Bronx and on Rockaway Beach Boulevard in Queens resulted in a major police crackdown at the city's two more renowned sites.

Suddenly, a ramshackle police cruiser turns on to the strip, moving forward as if driving through mud. But before an officer can utter a single syllable of the riot act, keys turn in ignitions and word spreads to meet at 150th Street by Kennedy airport. There, the night is sure to continue for another hour or two, or at least until the next cop asks them to move along. New York's fastest could avoid this constant inconvenience by going to legal tracks in West Hampton or Riverhead, but most everyone feels that the high-caliber, bona fide racers will always show up on Fountain Avenue. "Besides," Val says above the clamor of revving motors, "who the hell wants to go to Long Island?" KEVIN P. Q. PHELAN

Val speaks like a possessed preacher delivering a Sunday sermon. 'My wife could be in labor, and it's like, 'Sorry, gotta go race.' "

E. 54TH ST., 11:30 P.M.

The Asia SOCIETY

"ASIANS ARE LIKE, UH, very stoic," says Waldon Han, D.J. of Pulse, a small club on East 54th Street that caters to Asian-Americans on Saturday nights. "It takes alcohol and music to loosen them up."

Waldon and his older brother, Dalton, both twentysomething Chinese, have been spinning on the Asian party circuit—mostly Chinese and Korean—for more than nine years.

"They like high-energy Eurodisco," explains the younger Han, flipping through his vast record collection, headset perched against his ear. "They *love* that stuff."

As Amber croons the fading refrain to "This Is Your Night," Han slips on another disc. A chirpy voice, like Madonna on helium, fills the strobe-lit room.

I'm a Barbie girl in Barbie world.

A flurry of hands wave in the air. A sea of faces mouth the words.

You can brush my hair. Undress me everywhere.

"What'd I tell you," shouts Han, beaming. "They *love* that shit!"

Revelers start arriving at Pulse just before midnight. It peaks around 1:30 A.M., early by most clubbing standards. The coat-check girl, a charcoal-eyed mocha woman in her early twenties, attributes it to body weight. "They get drunk quicker," she explains. "Believe me. I've thought a lot about it."

Tonight, the mood at Pulse is a little strained. There was a costume party for NYU dental students earlier in the evening, and some of them aren't leaving. Scores of masked would-be orthodontists stand gawking along the Harlequin-checkered floors.

"It's amazin'-Asian night," slurs Fred from Connecticut, whose blood-alcohol level appears to be pushing 0.1 percent. "I'm looking for the most beautiful girl. Because of my hair loss, that would have to be an Asian female. Asian women love people that don't have hair on their head. It's a common known fact."

Some of the regulars are not as amused. "A lot of Asians came and left," says Chris, a Vietnamese bond trader from Battery Park.

Dalton Han explains that Asians come to Pulse to chill with their own community. "A lot of times when Asians go to a large club like the Tunnel, they feel lost in the crowd," he says. "Especially the guys. Asian women tend to be popular. A lot of white guys like having an Asian girlfriend. They think it's exotic. But the guys here want to meet Asian girls. And the girls want to meet Asian guys, or dance and party and not worry about being hit on. Asian men aren't as aggressive."

Nor are they as pharmaceutically stimulated as many of their clubbing counterparts around town. At least at Pulse, the buzz is primarily alcohol-induced.

"We're a clean-cut bunch," boasts 24-year-old patron John Lee. "No drugs."

By 3 A.M., the dance floor has thinned out. The dentists have gone home to remove their clown makeup, and a few black-clad youths lie passed out on the benches against the wall. The only white guys hanging around are several paunchy bouncers patrolling the area—in case Chinatown gangsters drop by.

"The Asian culture isn't inclined to party like Hispanics and blacks," young Han explains with a shrug. "You know, it's that Confucian thing." DAVID BAHR

HOUSTON STREET, MIDNIGHT

Twelve-Steppin' OUT

"THE SUN GOES DOWN and I have to make this decision. Do I just stay inside and hide—or do I come here?" Drew, a 30-year-old banker, eyes the milling crowd with a mixture of wariness and relief. "Here" is the Alcoholics Anonymous group on Houston Street, where Drew repairs almost every Saturday for the 8 P.M. meeting. And the 10 P.M. meeting. And, usually, the midnight meeting. Some nights he'll even stick around for the final, 2 A.M. gathering. "Saturday night is like a war zone," Drew says. "I get in here and I feel safe. I don't want to venture out again before I have to."

It's a sentiment shared by many of those assembled inside the ramshackle building—two dozen people slouching on metal chairs in a semicircle, helping one another ward off temptation. "It's no coincidence that these meetings are scheduled one after the other, all night long," notes one participant. "Saturday is rough." The rest of the week may be taken "one day at a time," but tonight, things are best handled hour by hour.

Like many other alcoholics, Drew used to devote his weekend nights to a different ritual. As a college student in England, he'd drink for two days straight: "Saturday would come around and there was a routine. There were a certain number of pubs, and you'd hit them in a certain order, depending on when last call was." After college, Drew moved to America, and the nine-to-five life began.

But weekends remained his focus, sometimes to the discomfort of his friends. "After a couple of hours, my mates were like, 'We can't keep up with you, man,' and I was still raring to go. I figured, *They're Yanks. They can't hold their liquor.*"

In a peeling diner on Houston Street just after the midnight meeting, Drew is nursing what he says is his "thousandth" cup of coffee. He is not alone. On Saturday evenings, the AA meetings virtually spill over into this dive, where sponsors and friends linger over caffeine and nicotine, discussing their sobriety. "See! That's what bothers me about the sixth step!" someone exclaims from a nearby table. "For some reason, this is a big coffee-drinking crowd," the waitress notes, without irony.

Drew artfully rearranges his silverware. "The rest of the week, I see people in bars and think, *Well, I don't have time for that—I've got work in the morning,*" he says. "I tell myself those people in that bar are pathetic; they have no lives. But I see those same people on Saturday, partying, and I just want to be them."

Drew's life changed almost two years ago, when he came back from a "working lunch" after chasing a bottle of Chardonnay with three martinis. His boss promptly sent him home. He arrived there to find his wife packing a suitcase.

"My daughter was 2 years old," he says. "She was just at the age when she was talking a blue streak, you know? I'd come home and she'd talk my ear off." Drew's voice gets hoarse and he stares into his cup. In the harsh fluorescent light, his light-brown hair looks gray. "There's just this unbelievable silence now when I walk through the door."

Six weeks after his wife left him, Drew attended his first AA meeting. It was, of course, a Saturday night, "when I was so desperate for alcohol that I was eyeing a bottle of cough syrup." A year later, he discovered the meetings on Houston Street. "I never plan on going to all three," Drew says. "But once I get there, it's hard to leave." At 3 A.M., the waitress begins to tap her foot. Leaving a few quarters on the table, Drew emerges into a drizzle that has turned suddenly cold. "I can't wait for this night to end," he says wearily, and heads for home.

KATE COYNE

TIMES SQUARE, 1 A.M.

THE SWING SET

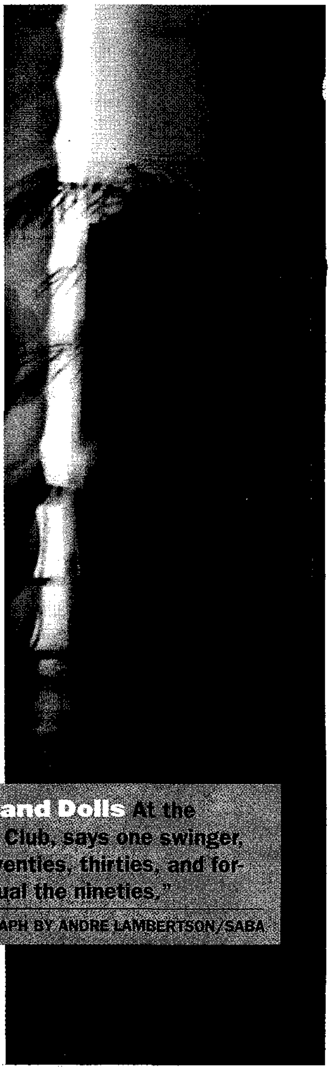
SATURDAY NIGHT MAY BE in trouble, but here at the Supper Club, a few dozen aging club kids have shown up in their grandparents' clothes, trying to save it.

"Saturdays are not subversive anymore. Weekends are like malls. It's getting way too *Footloose*-ian," says Mr. Fancy, a dapper, thirtyish downtown club promoter whose rectangular horn-rims and trim black vintage suit make him look like Yves Saint Laurent doing Glenn Miller. "New Yorkers just *don't* go out on Saturdays," mourns his sidekick, Miss Penelope Tuesday, a 22-year-old hipster with a red Myrna Loy haircut waxed to her skull and an FDR-length cigarette holder.

That may be true in some New Yorks, but not in this one, here, tonight. At the plush Supper Club, on 47th Street, once the Edison Ballroom, there's been an odd rebirth: Suddenly, the Jimmy Dorsey days are back. On Saturdays, kids wander in wearing vintage suits, fedoras, two-tone wing tips—and actually wearing them well.

"Swing coming back definitely has something to do with approaching the twenty-first century," says Lee Bennett Sobel, the promoter of "Supper Club Swing!" and veteran of various rockabilly, ska, and lounge revivals. "Things in the late nineties are so fast-paced, technology is growing at such an incredible rate, and there's just a backlash."

Those who follow the scene insist it's a democratic rebuke to the velvet-rope traditions of clubland, so long as you aren't wearing jeans. Indeed, on any given night, you can find at least one middle-aged lawyer from New Jersey spinning and twisting through the lindy hop, a dance once considered almost pornographic. Mostly, though, the scene is made up of passport-carrying hipsters—girls whose tattoos



Guys and Dolls At the Supper Club, says one swinger, "the twenties, thirties, and forties equal the nineties."

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE LAMBERTSON/SABA

peek out under tight forties sweaters, guys in gangstery pinstripes and pencil mustaches.

"I'm the caped crusader against grungewear," says Luigi, pulling a cigarette from a golden case.

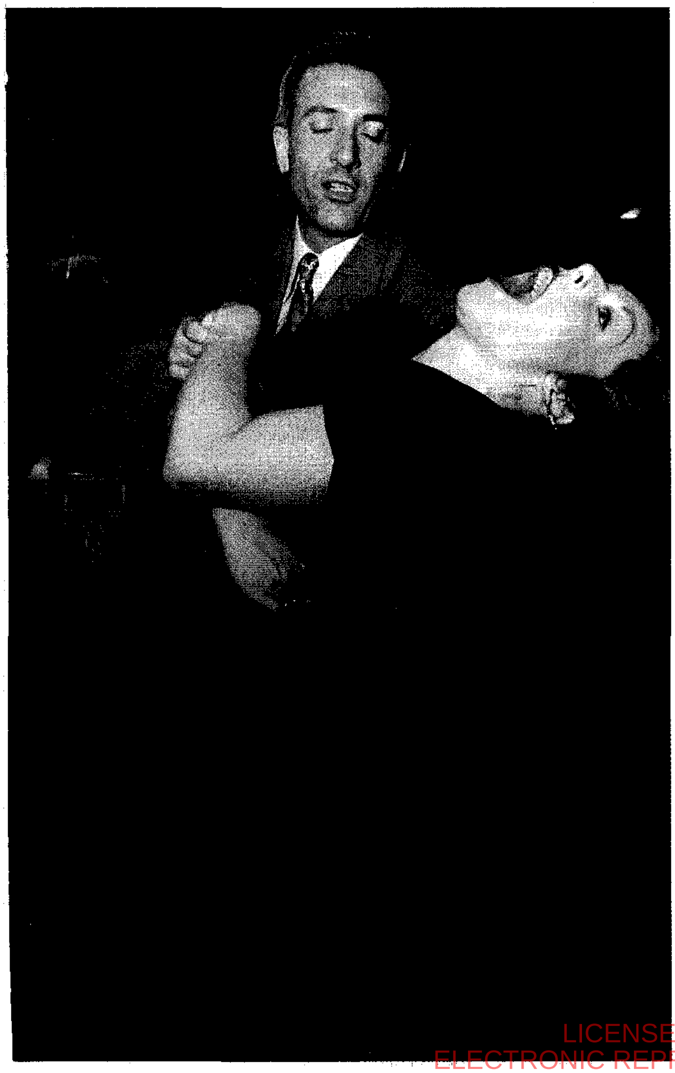
There are, of course, some attitudes that have carried over from the more debauched clubland of yesteryear.

"Giuliani and his fascist police," spits Luigi "Babe" Scorcia. "It's so safe now in New York. You need the undercurrent, the characters, the hangouts."

Luigi, 41, is the self-proclaimed (and proclaimed . . . and proclaimed . . .) "King of Swing." More accurately, he is the Technicolor-extreme of the new Swing, a nicotine-voiced *paesan* out of Gravesend who's just so natty it hurts. He looks like Armand Assante, likes to talk about the wiseguys he knows, and wears his peroxide-blond hair pomaded into a helmet.

"I'm the caped crusader against grungewear," says Luigi. He leans in to the bar and pulls gold-tipped Nat Sherman cigarettes from a gold-plated case. Swing acolytes continually materialize around him. Luigi floats another pronouncement: "The twenties, thirties, forties together equal the nineties."

"I would disagree," counters Mr. Fancy. "Some of the acts we book do "Dancing Queen" with a swingin' beat. I think it's thirties-to-eighties. I want to hear Pat Benatar to a swing beat."



"It's all about simulacrum. Do you know the term *simulacrum*?" says a blonde woman in a forties cotton dress. She's about 28, and offers her profession ("visual-interface designer") if not her name. She tries it in more human terms.

"Because you feel that you're in an event that seems to take place in a past time, men revert to the customs of approaching women," she says. "And women become more approachable, because that was the custom of the women of that time."

"It's a nice way for single women to touch single men," explains "Broccoli" Rob Cittadino. Broccoli Rob plays stand-up bass for Dem Brooklyn Bums, whom Luigi manages. Luigi thinks they can be the Stray Cats of swing.

"I live over in Greenpoint, Brooklyn," he says. "I tell ya, my guys, a couple of 'em, they're in maintenance for the Board of Ed. We got our day gigs workin' Operating Engineers Union, Local 94 and Local 891, ya know? We're blue-collar, which makes us even *more* retro."

Broccoli Rob surveys the ballroom, which is filling with couples lindying acrobatically, women careering around men's hips, skirts flying up carelessly. "You know what?" he says. "We're doing it like it was the first time around, because it's a movement of rebellion, like it was the first time around. It's 'today.' And back *then,* it was 'today.' It's the alternative to alternative."

Luigi was once "Disco Lou With the Two-Tone Shoes." Broccoli Rob once worshiped Gene Simmons. "You grow older, your tastes refine a little bit," Broccoli Rob says.

"I want to propose a toast," announces Luigi. All around him, Cosmopolitans are raised in the air.

"See, if everybody would just dress up, there would be no problems in this world," he says. "People wouldn't want to get their *outfits* mussed."

ALEX WILLIAMS

Taxi Driver

Midnight Bats refers to himself proudly in the third person as the Last American Cab Driver. He has the rubbery good looks of a character actor—a goombah in the crowd outside the Ravenite Social Club when Oliver Stone finally gets around to making the Gotti movie. While he's working, he wears black plastic shoes purchased for a dollar in a thrift store.

"I have probably slept with nearly a hundred women from driving the cab," he tells me, moving down Broadway.

A hundred?

"Maybe 75," he demurs.

But the two women who get in at 45th and Broadway are not won over by his charm. "What's wrong with your friend's eyes?" Bats asks the blonder of the two.

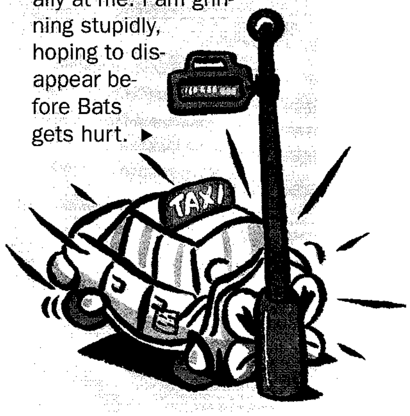
With a deep twang, the woman, whose friend has an obvious thyroid condition, tells Bats to mind his own business and take them to a club on Lexington Avenue and 47th Street. Unfazed, Bats continues his inquiries: "Where you from, Texas?"

"Yes."

"You going to Denim and Diamonds?"

"Yes."

"You like to dance country?" He continues to hector her, though she's no longer responding. He's winking conspiratorially at me. I am grinning stupidly, hoping to disappear before Bats gets hurt. ▸



WEST 14TH STREET, 3 A.M.

Glam Nerds and Cyber Sluts, FETISHISTS AND GOTHS

ONSTAGE, FALON IS MANIPulating a black phonecord leash attached to Marti Domination's six-inch chrome-cone breasts, and the crowd of glam nerds, gender-hackers, punks, fetishists, and goths is loving it. Six feet five from stiletto-heel points to hair-fountain apex and dressed in a gleaming *bustier* with black rubber hoses coiling from it, Falon is like a colossus straddling past and future, male and female, cyberspace and reality. If Julia Roberts shacked up with Edward Scissorhands, Falon would be their androgynous love child.

On a screen behind the two cyber sluts, images and messages like UPGRADE YOUR SYSTEM flash in micro-moment intervals while industrial house music pounds with a beat so deep you can feel it in your childhood. Marti writhes in languid submission on the end of her mammo-leash. As Falon points an orange plastic ray gun at his slave, a Oz-like female voice declares with simple drama, “Domination.”

This is Click + Drag, the only cyber-fetish-gothic scene in New York. Tonight happens to be the first anniversary of the party, so the regulars are out in force at Mother, a cozy three-room club in the meatpacking district. Near the door stands the club's owner, Chi Chi Valenti, a convivial, full-bodied woman decked out in an elaborate black gown. Her hair is done up in lavish blonde curls. As she greets her guests, Valenti—who runs the club with her husband, Johnny Dynell—explains that Click + Drag differs from other parties in the way it brings together diverse segments of the subculture. So you have “glam nerds,” computer programmers in self-parodying outfits of sweater vests and nerd glasses, but you also have omnipierced, leather-clad fetishists and flamboyantly wigged-and-gowned trannies. The mix may be unlikely but it is not uneasy. Everyone you talk to says the same thing: Click + Drag is safe; Click + Drag is a family. And as Valenti says, “It's a voyeur's paradise.”

It's also a *faux*-cyber setting in which a racy computer programmer can live out his dreams. In a way, Click + Drag is both a salute and a response to the thriving online community. It aspires to be a real-world simulation of virtual interactivity. Like anonymous chat-groupers, Click + Draggers feel free to be whoever they want to be. That idea attracts people like Falon, who during the day is a buttoned-down computer administrator.

After the cyber sluts' performance, which is just a tone-setter for the evening, Falon goes downstairs to the lounge, a dimly lit room best described by the lone prefix *sub,* as in *subterranean* and *sub rosa.* The lounge, like almost every living room in America, centers on a television, but instead of tuning in to *Saturday Night Live,* the small group of people clustered around it is watching three transvestites putting on a playful S&M pantomime in a cramped bathroom stall upstairs. Normally, this would be a live feed from the bird's-eye camera, but in honor of the anniversary, a VCR is running a tape of the year's greatest hits. There's no sound with the picture, but an elec-

La Vie en Russe

“We want to keep *everyone* happy,” says Michael Rosenberg, master of ceremonies at Rasputin, the most famous Russian nightclub in Brighton Beach—tables have to be reserved around two months in advance. Rasputin's austere, marbleized façade resembles a cross between an Italian funeral home and a Home Depot, but inside, the mood is 100-proof Russian rococo. Every Saturday, hundreds turn out for Rasputin's famed floor show, which begins promptly at ten. Women in sequined mini-dresses and Siberian white fur hats perform traditional Russian dances. Leggy showgirls in full-length Lycra gowns and sombreros perform high kicks to the techno song “Party Girl.” Smoke pours down from overhead machines; spotlights swirl. The showgirls return in headdresses, bikinis, fishnets, high heels, and capes. Down enough vodka, and feel like you're on a Carnival cruise—crossing the Caspian Sea. **ONDINE COHANE**

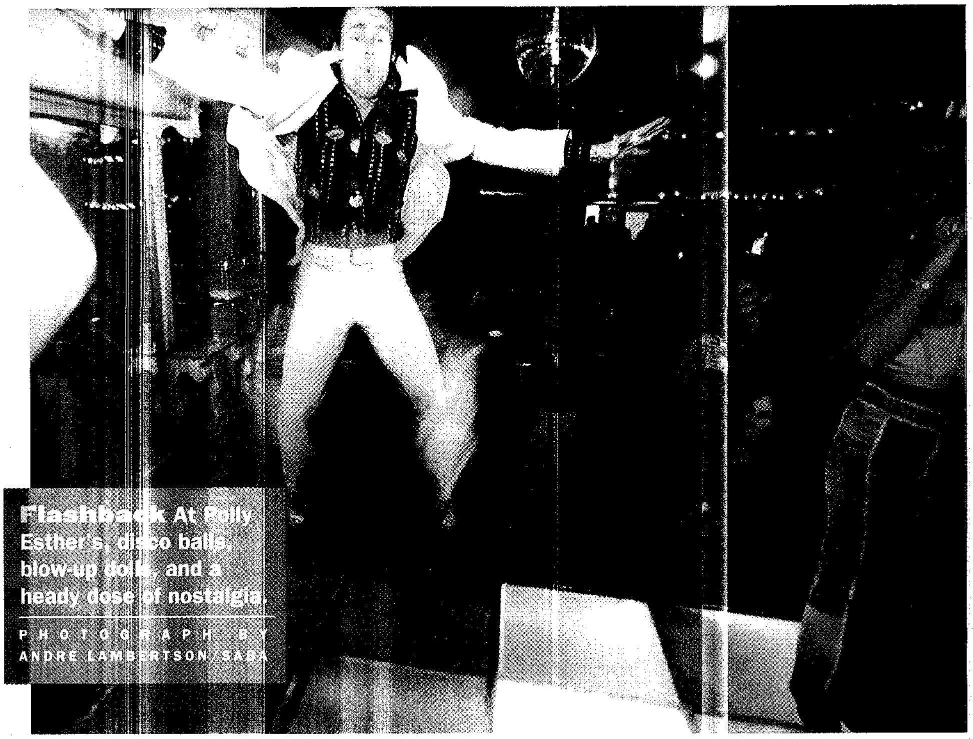
PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE LAMBERTSON/SABA

tronica version of "I Think We're Alone Now" happens to be playing on the lounge speakers.

In the even dimmer back half of the lounge, several black-clad guests sit on a sofa against the wall watching a female slave in a minuscule black bikini get disciplined with a strange electric-fork device that looks and sounds like a handheld bug zapper. The male master runs the wand down the slave's back, and its purple neon tongs buzz and crackle like sheep shears. Soon the wand overheats, however, so the master takes a break and goes over to say hi to a dominatrix sitting with her two fortyish male slaves.

"The outfits, performances, and sideshows may be pleasant diversions, but the true soul of Click + Drag can be found on the dance floor at 3 A.M. and beyond. That's when D.J. Saint James is spinning an unclassifiable mélange of music, much of it industrial and hard house, but also frequent sets in which Led Zeppelin slips into Fugazi or the *Munsters* theme song introduces kHz. Of all the houses Saint James has spun for, he likes this one best, because the crowd has a good musical memory and "likes their music to be fucked with." Down below his booth at that hour, the dance floor is a seething hormonic convergence, and leather boys are up onstage soloing with trannies and goths. Falon and Marti Domination are on the go-go cube reprising their act. Strobe lights are reflecting off the smoke from an E-Z Fogger. Women in leather wasp-waisted corsets are back-to-back with eighties-style punks.

Then, perhaps inevitably, the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive" comes on, and everyone kicks into high groove. Reserved trannies who haven't danced all night get out on the floor. Somebody hits a serious spotlight, and suddenly the place is awash in postage stamps of light, all swimming in the same direction. Even on the margins of Saturday night, there's still room for a disco ball. BRIAN FARNHAM



Flashback At Polly Esther's, disco balls, blow-up dolls, and a heady dose of nostalgia.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE LAMBERTSON/SABA

The Spirit of Polyester

THE FRENZIED MOB IS SEEKING HIGHER GROUND. PEOPLE are jumping on top of the benches and tables that surround the crowded dance floor, singing and dancing in almost perfect synch, as two young men in white sculpted polyester pants and black muscle-T's prance on top of the long bar, pulling ladies to line dance to "Greased Lightning." The whole room mimics John Travolta's gyrations as the movie *Grease* plays on the TV monitors. Even the bartenders get into the act.

Moments later, the happy crew is slurring the words to "Margaritaville," as a group of young refugees from a bachelorette party enters the bar. Their leader, dressed in a wedding veil, carries an anatomically correct male blow-up doll. "I love this place!" yelps a beer-swilling man in his mid-twenties who looks like he's been wearing the same clothes for several Saturday nights in a row. "It's the second bachelorette party that's come through tonight." He nudges his slack-jawed buddy as the giggling girls parade past with cigars hanging out of their mouths.

Polly Esther's, a seventies-and-eighties-theme chain discotheque, is an oasis of white-bread hokiness in a seedy stretch of the West Village. Hustlers, panhandlers, and leather-clad, multi-pierced worshipers of Satan congregate just steps away from the entrance, with its large, goofy smiley-face logo.

This could be the closest thing New Yorkers will come to a midwestern-college-fraternity party, but the women outnumber (and outdrink) the men almost two to one. Except for their penny loafers, the men are dressed like L.L. Bean lumberjacks; the ladies look as if they have just come from a sale at Talbot's. A white turtleneck with a pastel-colored cardigan wrapped around the waist or shoulders appears to be the uniform of sorts. The customers are lined up five or six deep at the bar, ordering such libations as Brady Punch and Jaws shooters.

A swinging private party in the back room catches the attention of several onlookers. Five Wall Street trainees wearing sunglasses mount a mini-platform and proceed to lip-synch Rick Springfield's "Jessie's Girl" into air microphones. Their dates, mostly NYU college co-eds, look on, swooning and shrieking. Caught up in the excitement, a few of them hurl their brassieres onstage.

Back in the main room, "Disco Inferno" is blaring from the speakers, and a strapping guy has donned the bachelorette's veil. By now the celebrants are stumbling around like woozy bumblebees as the cocktails take their toll. The blow-up doll is passed around the dance floor with a sexual device planted in its anus.

At 2 A.M., a group of British women huddles in a corner to compare notes on the evening. "Did anybody get a phone number?" asks one. "I did, I did!" exclaims another, holding up the prized business card. Unfortunately, the bloke lives in Albany.

"Look at all these *broads*!" gushes Joey, 26, from Garden City, who remembers very little from the seventies but likes what he sees. "There's tons of 'em, and they all like to get *wasted*. . . . I can't stand them snobby clubs in SoHo where girls drink bottled water and look at you like you're some kinda asshole."

BRADEN KEIL

Tunnel Vision

While other clubs rush to cater to ever-narrower swaths of would-be trendsetters, the Tunnel's circus tent remains big enough for all: wide-eyed bridge-and-tunnelers, prematurely jaded teens, even honest-to-goodness *models*. Pluralism, of course, has its limits. For those who are simply too fabulous to rub elbows with the masses, there's the Kenny Scharf–designed VIP room. Some things never change. **ZEV BOROW**

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN KAFKA

LUDLOW STREET, 1 A.M.

Downtown's DISNEYLAND

'THIS IS THE ONLY neighborhood where we could afford to do what we wanted," cracks Johnny Santiago, explaining the decision to open Torch, a sprawling, elegantly appointed forties-style supper club, on Ludlow Street. It looks as though luck was with him: At 1 A.M. on Torch's fifth night of business, the place is packed wall-to-wall with revelers. Twentysomethings in standard-issue Gap ensembles slurp raw bivalves at the bar, spill their martinis on each other, and watch a lounge singer croon Cole Porter through a vintage microphone.

The New York *Times* recently described this corner of the Lower East Side as the new Bohemia. "The new 57th Street" is more like it. Economics may have played a role in Torch's location, but it joins an already-thriving theme-bar community. A few doors down, partyers relax in assembly-line bliss at the Motor City Bar, an homage to Detroit. Over at Norfolk and Delancey, bouncers in Dutch Schultz getups keep watch over the back-alley entrance to the Lansky Lounge—Ratner's Restaurant's back room, which doubles as a perfectly legal *faux* speakeasy. With its fifties-soda-fountain booths, Baby Jupiter, at Stanton and Orchard, is a dead ringer for the Peach Pit—the *Beverly Hills 90210* hangout.

Despite the continuous presence of at least one patrol car, the throngs stroll through the scene with the air of tourists on vacation. And with good reason: The kind of fun they're engaged in is legal, genteel, and orderly. They're *glad* the cops scare the dealers away.

Ludlow Street's ultimate theme bar, though, may be Max Fish, which earned its reputation several years ago as a heroin-chic breeding ground. Rock stars and kids with star quality hung out all night, listening to the Minutemen on the jukebox. Today, just as its neighbors provide simulacra of other cities in other eras, Max Fish simulates Ludlow Street in the early nineties. The ironic décor's the same; the music's the same; but Max Fish now teems with the same mobs that pack surrounding establishments.

"I've been working seven days a week for a month," says Alex, a 26-year-old computer-graphics artist crammed into a corner table on a recent Saturday. "I've barely been going out at all lately." Alex may not have been on the town much, but people like him have been. Young professionals who can't be classified either as artists or yuppies, they embody the neighborhood's ongoing transformation into a slightly risqué version of SoHo.

Tonight, though, work is the furthest thing from Alex's mind. "I've been out of circulation for six months," he moans. "I'm *desperate*." As if on cue, he's distracted by a woman in fur making her way in from the door. "Hey!" he shouts, making groping gestures in the air as he shoulders his way through the crowd, toward the woman, and into the night. ETHAN SMITH

BAY STREET, 10 P.M.

Staten Island SUITE

IT MAY BE THE CLOSEST thing to a hipster outpost on Staten Island, but the Cargo Café—a glowing square of green located on a desolate strip of Bay Street—caters to all manner of frustrated Islanders who cannot bear another fruitless trek into Manhattan. A trendy Asian with a pompadour presides over the bar. The booths are occupied by trembly couples on first dates; self-styled bohos congregate at the pool table; guys on the prowl belly up to the bar. Back in the day, the ferry was the scene for the restless Islander, but Giuliani shut that party down. "You could spend a whole Saturday night just drinking, riding back and forth—like the homeless guys on the subway," says Michael, a young Haitian who hangs at the Cargo most every Saturday. He likes the vibe here; it beats the bars in Brooklyn—he was shot in one Jamaican bar and, a few months later, stabbed in an Irish pub. (Both events, he says, were random.) Here, Michael feels secure enough to leave his .357 Magnum in the car.

"I left *my* toy at home," offers the middle-aged guy next to Michael. His name is Mike; he says he used to work for the Justice Department, and he carries a .44 since he got shot—thirteen times—in a bust gone awry. "I wasn't always this pretty," he says wryly. Other than this shared history, they make a curious pair: Michael, with his shaved head and puffy Ralph Lauren jacket, raises his martini glass to Mike, whose thinning blond hair sticks up in short spikes and whose burly frame is encased in black leather. He hoists his pint in return.

Mike is content on Staten Island, conditionally: "It's very conservative out here," he says. "In Manhattan, you can just go and rent a porno, but here, it's all behind closed doors. It's the same with skin rags—in Manhattan, they're just lined up, all glossy, out in the open. Not here. Here it's ass-backwards. *Ass-backwards."*

Still, Staten Island is making progress. "There was a time when you'd get beat up if people so much as thought you were gay," says Mike. "All the white kids would beat up blacks, anyone different—it's gotten better, but it still happens." Michael nods gravely; Mike surveys the room. "You know, this place used to be a gay bar," he says, with strained nonchalance.

"As you can see, you still get a bit of that flaky element," he continues. "But that's okay."

MAUREEN CALLAHAN

EAST 76TH STREET, 11 P.M.

EAST SIDE STORY

"I CAN'T BE OUT TOO LATE," groans Dominique, 17, as she adds another bobby pin to hold her chin-length brown hair in place. "I have a two-o'clock curfew!" Dressed in a white tank top with black bra straps peeking out, she's eating rice cakes and deciding what to wear. DKNY and Gucci ads paper the door to her room; an Elmo doll sits in the corner.

Tonight's agenda, as on every weekend night for Dominique and her Upper East Side private-school chums, includes a trip to SoHo with a preliminary stop at Iggy's or Crossroads, the latest in the way of underage watering holes. "Last weekend, cops came in with video cameras and loaded rifles," she says, unfazed, after deciding on a tight brown dress and knee-high black boots.

Plowing through the icy fall night, she stops in a deli on Lexington for cigarettes, but turns on her heel when the clerk asks her for I.D. "He's an asshole for asking me for it," she says, and heads for the newsstand on 86th. Two boys—Hanson look-alikes in extra-baggy pants—attempt a menacing glance. "They probably live on Fifth Avenue," Dominique laughs.

At Iggy's, there's no one at the door, which means patrons won't have to use their homemade passports or driver's licenses. "How exciting," she smiles, and slips past the long, narrow bar into the back room. Two prepubescent-looking girls with long, wet hair are not so lucky. "We're leaving in one second!" they growl to the overworked bartender while covering the mouthpieces of their cell phones.

By 11:30, the seats in back are filled. A crowd of boys suited up in J. Crew sweaters and backward baseball caps look restless while smoking Parliaments and sucking down vodkas on the rocks. "I've been coming here for two years," says Mike, looking around, "and I have no idea why."

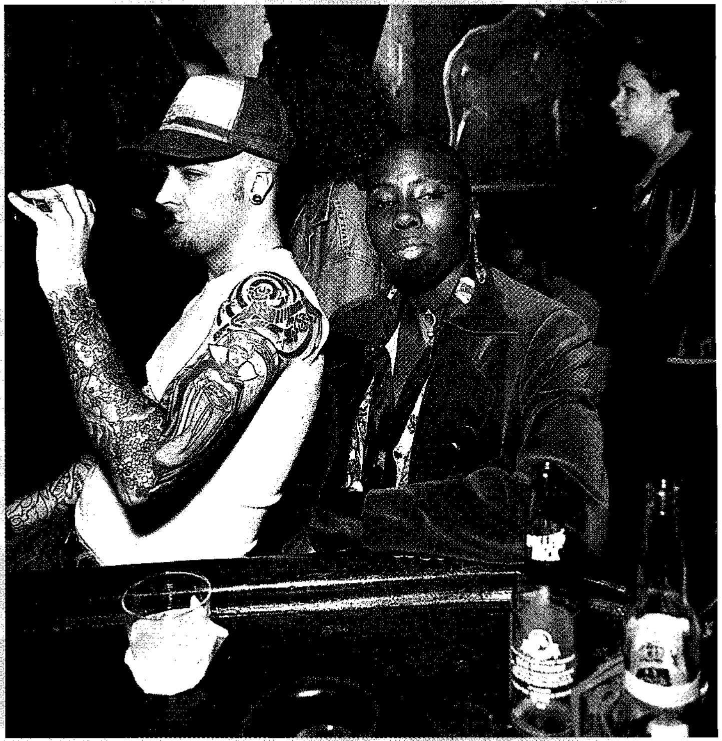
"How's school?" Dominique asks her friend, a senior at Humanities who's smuggled in his own Heinekens. "You going?" "Yes," he says coyly. "I've only missed three classes." He brags that he's spent the day acting in an independent film. "Oh," replies Dominique's friend Katie, wearily, "who *isn't* in an independent film?"

Another boy arrives—a senior at an all-boys prep school. He insists tonight will be an early one. "I have no drugs and no money. *And* I left my bank card at home." At 12:30, the two girls decide to head downtown. A nearby table of boys makes a last effort to keep them, but they leave holding hands and jump into a cab. "I don't know *what* they expected," says Katie, re-applying her MAC lip liner.

On Greene Street, a large crowd has gathered in front of Spy. "Private party," the girls giggle to each other, knowing that's the line the doormen give hapless scenesters when they don't want them inside. Dominique flashes a familiar grin as the bouncer rushes to unhook the velvet rope. The two girls spend the rest of the night drinking vodka cranberries and taking pictures of themselves with a tiny Elph camera. "It's funny," says Katie. "When I started high school, my friends were in the group that didn't think we were special. Now we're the ones who get into Spy."

SARAH BERNARD

Every Girl a King



At Bar 85, in the no-man's-land west of Tenth Avenue in the teens, the thumping bass line of a Toni Braxton remix drowns out the sound of the buzzing clippers. A boyish go-go dancer with crosses of black tape covering her nipples gyrates onstage, kicking with her black combat boots. Customers in camouflage outfits and army caps run up and tuck bills into her black G-string. No, the fleet isn't in. It's "G.I. Jane Night" at LoverGirl on a recent Saturday night, one of the countless floating parties "for women," and you can get your free Demi skinhead 'do right here. Lizerace, New York's "only white rapping drag-king disc jockey" adjusts her olive-green tank top and her fake stubble (hair clippings in wax) and prepares to perform, backed up by Cinnamon and a team of lithe femmes in the wee hours of the morning. MARIA RICAPITO

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG MILLER

EAST 168TH STREET, 3 A.M.

UPTOWN AT THE SAVOY

A NEON CONTINGENT OF women in DKNY bubble vests waits patiently alongside a cadre of guys in Avirex leather jackets outside the New Savoy, a small Bronx club at 168th Street and Jerome Avenue, a train stop or two from Yankee Stadium. The women, who outnumber the men five to one, arrive in packs, pocketbooks in tow, legs wrapped tightly in Lycra and denim. The men, sporting fresh braids and Afros, scan the long line of prospects from under low-riding skullcaps.

Inside, past the bar and body frisk, the world-famous D.J. Brucie B. is dropping party record after party record, provoking the crowd of young, mostly second-generation immigrants to move, jostle, pop, and jitter. Young hustlers slice through the crowd, Moët bottles in tow, leaving clouds of blunt smoke in their wake. A troupe of cappuccino-colored Li'l Kim-ites settle near the four-foot speakers, spilling plastic cups of Bailey's and losing themselves in the bass, while others mime their favorite videos on the dance floor.

This is tradition in the Boogie Down Bronx, the place where hip-hop was born and bred, the raw-dog borough of jagged edges and heavy accents. Parties are more than an evening out; they are a point of pride. On the Savoy's dance floor, the gestures are high-frequency, more emphatic. The groove? Deeper, warmer, longer. The familiar voices booming from the speakers—Mase, Puffy, Mary J. Blige, Lord Tariq and Peter Gunnz, Dru Hill, Li'l Kim—preach a hip-hop gospel to an already converted crowd.

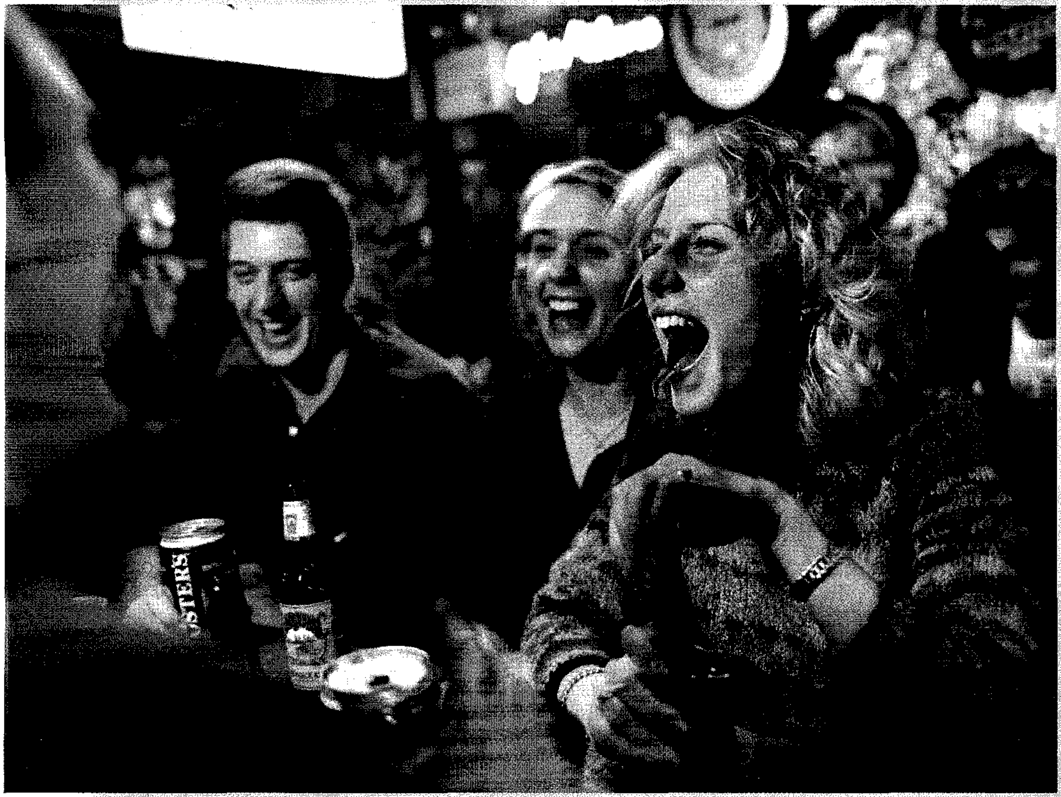
By 2 A.M., the place is packed, and Brucie B. is pushing the crowd into ever-higher states of controlled frenzy. Hands are raised, numbers are exchanged, everyday struggles are circumvented. "I'ma slow it down," says the D.J., "I'ma slow it down." And with that, he cross-fades to Usher's "You Make Me Wanna . . . ," which begins with a sampled guitar that both relieves and seduces the dance-weary throng. Some people move to the shadows; others grind in the circling light patterns. The young women by the speakers raise their empty cups to the song.

Outside, the laughter grows raucous, edged with the prospect of violence. "What up, fam?" old friends greet one another with shoulder hugs and fist pounds. By 3:30, the after-party ritual is in full swing—last-ditch attempts to leave with someone are executed with vigor.

Names and numbers are whispered, plans are made, groups pile into waiting cars. Two lonely-looking girls in camouflage loiter a bit, then trudge off to a nearby tenement. The crews and cars go their separate ways, flickering into the night like fireflies.

ROB MARRIOTT

They Take the Village



Bleecker Street on Saturday is colonized by three groups: people under 18, tourists, and trendoids on their way to Life. And odds are none of the above groups will even glance at the other, let alone meet. This factionalism is more pronounced during the school year, when baseball-cap-wearing, Portishead-loving NYU undergrads clog the street's narrow bars, playing high-stakes drinking games late into the night. There are those inclined to think *these* are the villains responsible for the area's high vomit count, although no one can be sure. Guys shouldering boom boxes, girls draped around their best guys, goths on spiked leashes, the woman who just ruined her Manolo Blahniks in the rain—all are suspect. VANESSA GRIGORIADIS

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN KAFKA

WEST 23TH ST.,1:30 A.M.

PARTY Till It Hurts

THE NASCENT KINKSTER IS new to the S&M scene and new to the city, and she needs a pervert-friendly haunt. The Vault, she thinks. Of course. Famous. Historical. And only $15 for single women on Saturday nights.

She heads west into the meatpacking district at midnight, just as the transsexual streetwalkers are starting to come out. When she reaches the corner of 13th and Washington, a soccer dad in a minivan stops and one of the girls

Cult Fiction

"Whatever happened to Saturday night?" Meat Loaf bellows for the zillionth time. But everyone at the Village East Cinemas knows: It means one more screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.* Tonight's "director," Mad Man Mike, who's been at it for fourteen years, explains it this way: "Everyone always says that people come to this movie . . . to see it again and again. *No. That's not it.* It's like a crowd of friends you see every night on the weekends. You go back to see *them* and enjoy something together." Doing the Time Warp again, and again and again. And again. CHRISTOPHER BONANOS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE McGANN

hops in. They drive away.

When she gets to the Vault on the West Side Highway, there's a line at the door. What the hell? She can't help noticing that, aside from the doorman, she's the only one wearing leather someplace other than her feet. My God, there's a gaggle of young men in chinos—one of them is even wearing a SPRING BREAK T-shirt. She hopes it's either a joke or a special Sartorial Banality Fetish Night.

Down the basement steps, she gets a quick pat-down and a bag inspection. "This isn't a dance club," the bouncer tells her. "There's no music here. This is a safe-sex S&M club." *God love a pedantic doorman,* thinks the Nascent Kinkster as she ponies up the $15 cover charge (it's $40 for single men, $50 for couples). But she can't blame the guy, really. So many people wear fetish gear these days, it's hard to tell the kinky from the vanilla.

Inside, it's like prom night at the high school of the damned. A mistress in sensible shoes has her masochist in standing bondage. Her implements are laid out on a cocktail table: tawse, quirt, single-tail whip, paddles, a few slender canes, a small flogger. Around her, tourists in exotic get-ups paw, paddle, gawp, and flirt. This isn't a pageant of arcane erotica so much as a Satyricon of suburbanites. Tranny hookers go bombing into the ladies' room to daub their stubbly cheeks with more cover-up. A few chaperones churn the massive crowd and confiscate bottles that made it past the doorman.

But in the basement jail cell, a burly black bulldagger dandies a hirsute Mitty type on her rubber member and tells her squealing charge to "hold onto the bars, baby. It's gonna be a bumpy ride." Nascent Kinkster wrinkles her tiny nose at such Sadean corn and alights to the second floor, which is sanctioned for couples on Saturday nights.

Upstairs, it's just grubby furniture, retired restraint equipment, and groups of people with their hands in each other's streetwear. There's no explicit sexual contact allowed—no oral sex, exchange of bodily fluids, bloodshed, or intercourse (the handsome dagger probably got special dispensation because her manhood was *faux*). Voyeurs will only see an exposed breast here, a cheap riding crop there. Nascent Kinkster doesn't think she's going to hook up with the dominant of her dreams tonight. Not here.

Oh, she wants to be positive. She wants to have a kind word for her fellow sexual-minority members. But everything here feels of desperation. The Vault has thus far evaded the reach of Giuliani's mop-'n'-bucket crew. But it doesn't make you want to drop to your knees on the floor. Because you'd stick to it.

It's not all bad: A cute young alternacouple is engaged in a hot-wax scene. She's got dreadlocks; he's lying on a bondage table covered with a layer of paper towels. But it's too little too late. As the Nascent Kinkster wedges past a clutch of pudenda-flashing middle-management types, she hears one of the Chino Patrol say, "I'm glad Helen isn't here, or her Wall Street image would be totally blown."

Hardly, the Nascent Kinkster thinks as she bounds out the door and bangs a right onto the meat-rank cobblestone streets.

LILY BURANA

It's like prom night at the high school of the damned. A mistress in sensible shoes has her masochist in standing bondage.

Taxi Driver

3 A.M. Bats marvels that in his 26 years on the job, he's never picked up anybody famous save Howard Cosell. "I asked him about Ali and Foreman and Rumble in the Jungle. I said, 'Do you know if that fight was fixed?'

"He said, 'I gave that a great deal of thought.' He said it really slowly, thoughtfully, like he does on TV. 'But no. No, I don't think that fight was fixed.' "

Bats is closing in on his twenty-sixth straight hour of work and wants a brisket sandwich from the Carnegie Deli. His regular cab is in the shop, so he has rented one for two 24-hour shifts. He's paying $320. So far, he has made about $200.

On 45th Street, Bats stops for a bartender just getting off duty. He's 78 and used to play trumpet for Tommy Dorsey. He hasn't picked up the horn since he quit the road twenty years ago. He misses the girls most. We take him home to 16th Street and Fifth Avenue.

On the corner, Bats picks up a very drunk young banker. "Drunks never know where they're going, or they always change their mind," predicts Bats. This one says he wants to go to 24th Street and Sixth Avenue. When we get there, the cab idles outside Billy's Topless for a full two minutes while the passenger looks at the flashing lights. He shakes his head violently: "Driver, take me to Penn Station." ▶

CRANFORD, N.J., 10 P.M.

Another CITY NOT THEIR OWN

“SHIT, YOU DON’T NEED a *reason* to go to Manhattan,” says 21-year-old Walter MacIdoe. He is slumped deep into the meager comfort of a seat on the 10:12 P.M. New Jersey Transit train to New York’s Penn Station. Despite pink, hooded eyes and an odorous hint of time recently spent with malt liquor, he is, of course, right. Especially on a Saturday night. “Yeah,” notes Pete Smith, 20, from Westfield, who is crumpled in a seat across the aisle. “You don’t need a reason, but if you don’t have a car, you do need a train ticket.”

Indeed. And much to the chagrin of the peevish residents of Manhattan, a few times every hour, packed New Jersey Transit trains come in from the suburbs and unload their expectant cargo smack in the middle of Sin City.

“What are we *supposed* to do,” sniffs Chris Christian, “stay in Jersey?” Christian and his friend Katie (“*please,* no last names”), both 18, caught the 9:40 from Raritan. Standing on the platform in front of Raritan’s stone-cottage station house, they were hard to miss: Christian in heavy black eyeliner, dark lip gloss, sunglasses, and ripped fishnet stockings; Katie in black-and-white striped Pippy Longstockings, lipstick the color of two-day-old blood, and knee-high purple Doc Martens. “I *have* to go to the city on Saturdays,” notes Katie. “I can’t stay here—I don’t even want to *live* here.” They’re headed to the Batcave, a goth club in Chelsea.

By the time the train pulls into Roselle Park, one stop before Penn Station, it’s three-quarters full. The atmosphere onboard is festive: People are swigging beer from paper cups; someone turns on a radio. Sanford Alvaro—a clean-cut 28-year-old Chilean in tight blue jeans and a white T-shirt—is on his way to the West Village. He’s been taking the train most Saturday nights for the past three and a half years. “I wouldn’t have to take the train if I lived in Manhattan,” he says. “But I don’t mind.” A trio of grinning Japanese businessmen chatter excitedly behind a 25-year-old construction worker named Scott O’Conner, who is on his way to see a girl. “I don’t usually go into the city at all,” he says. “But *this* girl made me an offer I couldn’t refuse.”

Steve Stewart, 29, is making the trip for more utilitarian reasons: He works Saturday nights from midnight to eight at a photo-processing plant in midtown. “The train can sometimes get a little rowdy on Saturdays, what with all the people going in to party, which can kind of get to you when you’re going in to process photos till dawn.” Across the aisle from Stewart, resplendent in black from head to toe, is 25-year-old Chyna Pierce, who lives in Plainview and is traveling to meet a friend in Newark. They’re going dancing and will have to wait until the first train Sunday morning to get home. “I’m gonna have to dance all night—there’s no other way.” Keith Halko and Sean Harlin, both 20 and from Bayonne, aren’t sure *when* the last train departs. “I guess we should find that out,” chuckles Halko from under the brim of a bright-red Yankees cap. “We’re just going in to chill, get fucked up, whatever.” He takes a swig from a brown-bagged 40-ounce beer. First stop? “Probably the Village, then maybe uptown from there.”

“It really doesn’t matter,” says Harlin. “It’s good to just get away from Jersey. Jersey sucks. Maybe next week we’ll go the other direction, out to Pennsylvania or some shit, hang with the hicks. But tonight we’re headed to New York.” ZEV BOROW

WEST 27TH STREET, 5 A.M.

THE SPIN DOCTOR

IT’S NEARING NOON AT THE world’s most decadent church service, where the faithful have been congregating since late last night. Somewhere above the crowd, a loud bell chimes. Its echo has just begun to fade when a second peal rings out, followed by a third. Soon, dozens upon dozens of bells are urgently clanging. The crowd, shouting, dancing, and waving madly, thinks it’s a sign from God, whose hairless head is beaming like an oversize lightbulb out of the D.J. booth.

“This might sound egotistical,” says Junior Vasquez, “but I am *not* a D.J. What I am,” he says with a melodramatic pause, “is a super-D.J. The chosen one who will take it to a whole new level. I will go down in history, *definitely,* as the D.J. of the nineties. I’m master of the club universe.”

With that, he crosses his pumped-up arms and furrows his brow, the vast, wrinkled terrain between two beady blue eyes and below a shiny bald dome, and turns back to his turntables.

After nearly three decades on the club scene, Junior Vasquez, now around 50, has indeed become a legend—as well known for his talent as for his blustery egomania. The son of a butcher from Pennsylvania (his given name is Donald Mattern) single-handedly

Strike a Pose

Bowling is *hip*? Who could have imagined? The pastime of the heartland’s Sansa-belted masses has become the pastime of Manhattan’s nose-ringed club kids. Saturday night at the AMF Chelsea Piers is a triumph of accessorizing: disco music, Day-Glo balls, and alleys outlined in twinkling Christmas lights. It’s an experience at once psychedelic and wholesome. Jackie Gleason, patron saint of New York bowling, is spinning, rhythmically, in his grave.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN KAFKA

Muscle Beach The scene at Juniorverse: pulsating music, strong drugs, trippy lights, and a crush of buff bodies.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE MCGANN

attracts thousands of people at whatever venue he plays.

More than any other D.J. on the scene, Vasquez defined dance music for the nineties: His blend of erotic house and tribal rhythms sent his followers into paroxysms of ecstasy. He's collaborated with Whitney, Cher, and Madonna: The last once proclaimed him the greatest D.J. in the world.

Vasquez got his start at Sound Factory, the legendary (and illegal) West 27th Street club where Drew Barrymore, Madonna, and Keith Haring partied alongside Chelsea muscle boys and home girls from the South Bronx. For nearly five years, he played the Factory every Saturday night. When police finally shuttered the premises after a 1995 Valentine's Day party, Vasquez moved on to the Tunnel—where Peter Gatien constructed a plush custom-designed $250,000 D.J. booth to lure him—and then moved to Gatien's Palladium. When the latter closed last September after a decade-long run, Junior mounted a fitting farewell: a dance marathon in which he spun for some 30 hours. His latest base is Twilo, the same venue that once housed Sound Factory. Its owners were so eager to hire Junior they agreed to rename their club after him: A ring of garish orange letters now spells out JUNIORVERSE around Twilo's boulder-size mirrored ball. "Juniorverse is my Dollywood," enthuses Vasquez: a gaudy theme park for the chronically understimulated.

"Juniorverse is my Dollywood," says the world-famous D.J.—a gaudy theme park where the party lasts until Sunday afternoon.

"WORK, JUNIOR!" 3,500 OR SO glamorous insomniacs begin to shout and whistle as the chiming bells fade into a thunder of drumbeats. Below him, the crowd is packed, sardinelike, on the dance floor; steroid-pumped gym bunnies, seven-foot-tall drag queens, trendy Asian youths wearing backpacks, overdressed bridge-and-tunnellers, and club kids in baggy jeans and fluorescent T-shirts all groove together. The walls shake with every thump. The driving beat and the drugs and the heat and the sweaty flesh combine to form an almost religious experience, illuminated by trippy lights and handheld glow sticks.

Though the alcohol stops flowing at 4 A.M. sharp, the party will continue until five the next afternoon. No one has a hard time staying up. A sizable group streams in around 10 A.M Sunday—having slept the previous evening—and dances the day away. Others bring along their own party favors, which seems to explain why the entrance to the ladies' room is choked with men, whose own bathroom offers fewer stalls for quick pick-me-ups. "I *live* for Junior—this party is too fierce!" shrieks a vinyl-clad androgyne who's reapplying black lipstick in a steamy mirror. "Is this crooked?" she asks, puckering a pair of chapped lips. "Somebody gave me a bump of coke, but it turned out to be K, and I've been in a huge hole all night and I can't see a *thing*."

A heroin-chic blonde, her bloodshot eyes raccoonishly rimmed in kohl, approaches with a look of urgency. "Do you know anyone who's selling?" she pleads, nervously tugging at the shoulder of her asymmetrical Gucci. "No? Ooooh, yucky," she whines, reluctant to squeeze through the testosterone blockade.

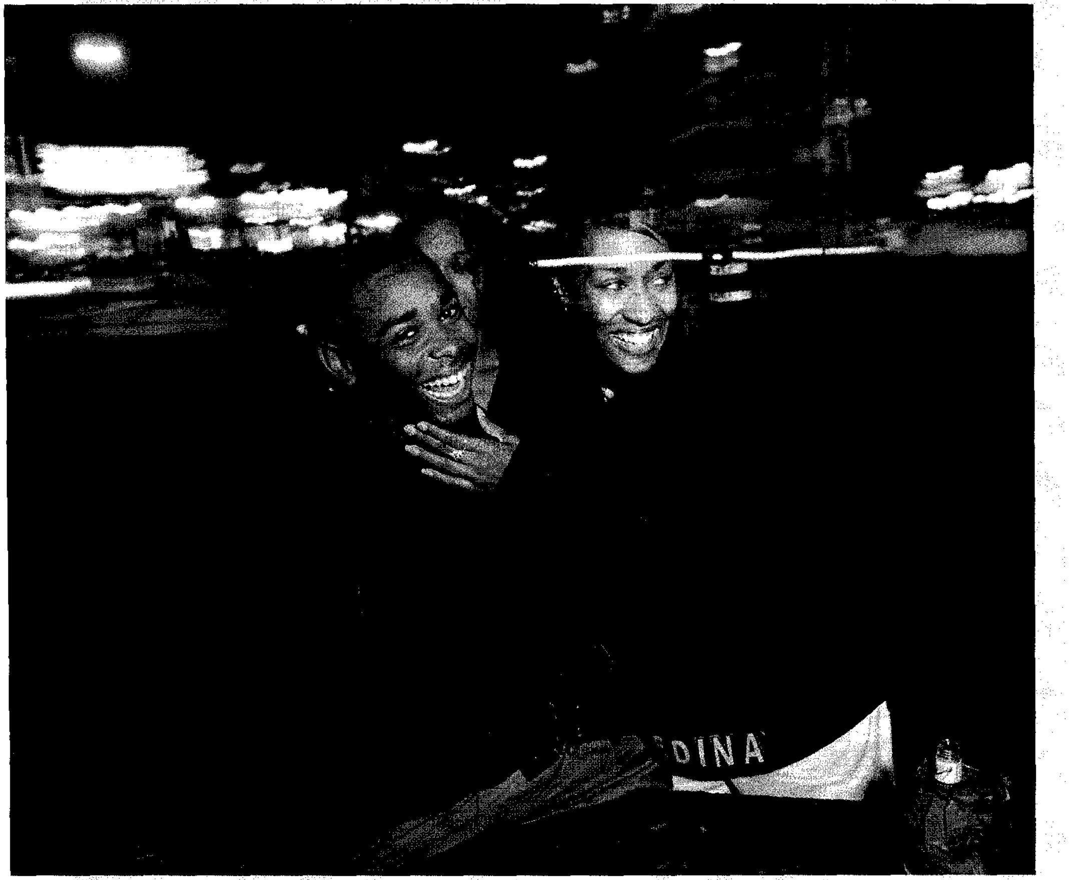
Inside the dimly lit bathroom, the temperature approaches that of a sauna. Lines of tense patrons stand in front of a row of stalls, impatiently awaiting a vacancy. Since the music isn't pumped in, it's strangely quiet—just the impatient tapping of feet, occasional flushes of the toilets, the running sink (where empty $4 bottles of Poland Spring are re-filled with tap water), and constant sniffing. “It must be allergy season,” someone jokes. Nobody laughs.

Back on the dance floor, a herd of people flee to the nearby lounge. Junior, in a sentimental mood, has decided to play Jewel’s undanceable ballad “Foolish Games.” He follows it with Elton John’s “Rocket Man” (the remixed version). Suddenly, shimmering snowflakes of light reflect off the disco ball and cast shadows across the crowd.

Several hundred people are still dancing late Sunday afternoon, when God finally decides to rest. Squinting unhappily, a long procession treks into the bright daylight: an *American Bandstand* for the end of the millennium.

JAMES PATRICK HERMAN

River Dance



Maybe it’s the twinkling lights of New Jersey, but the Hudson waterfront always inspires romance (an effect heightened by plentiful alcohol and boom boxes that blast James Brown). On weekends after dark, Pier 45, at the end of Christopher Street, turns into a giant, open-air nightclub where anything goes. Traffic? Cops? Cold? Who cares. At least there’s no cover.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN KAFKA

UPPER FIFTH AVENUE, 9 P.M.

Not Shaken NOT STIRRED

AT A LITTLE PAST NINE, THE tenuous peace of Fifth Avenue is marred by a throng of noisy young socialites making their way into Doubles—the private club in the Sherry-Netherland. Mai Hallingby and Enno Ercklentz have invited 200 of their closest pals to a 25th-birthday dinner dance for their daughter Cornelia Ercklentz. Cornelia, a tall, pretty blonde who graduated from Stanford with a degree in history, made her debut at the International Debutante Cotillion a few years ago and now puts in long days in sales for Bloomberg. Guests were asked to come dressed as their favorite James Bond characters; the invitation caused a run on James Bond films at Upper East Side video stores.

On Saturday, when restaurants around town are hijacked by amateurs, more discerning (read: rich) folks retreat to *intime,* selective birthday parties at safe places. Like Doubles, the current playhouse of the uptown demimonde. On this particular evening, departing the private club just as the would-be 007s are arriving is Baroness von Langendorff and her party of three, who look as if they might easily take all the prizes for best costume.

The Baroness is the widow of the man who created White Shoulders perfume, and a legendary denizen of Fifth Avenue. Sweet-faced and highly made-up, with an amply proportioned figure, she is famous for her jewels—earrings and necklaces of golf-ball-size diamonds, rubies, and emeralds that keep Cartier, Van Cleef, and Harry Winston prospering—and her fondness for bright colors. Tonight, she wears her thick, flaming-red hair running in a ruffle down her back, a red-and-gold dress, and a short mink, dyed a Day-Glo red, to match her how’m-I-doing rubies. Pussy Galore should live so long.

It’s a telling contrast between two eras, the Viennese-y baroness and her painted party amid a sea of young people who look like they’ve just stepped out of the shower after a game of tennis at the Maidstone Club. A smorgasbord of nouvelle and old New York society, the guests this evening include two genuine Bondian offspring—Tanya and Stephan Connery, who have come sans costume—and assorted young Lehmans, LeFraks, Vanderbilts, and Lauders. In recent months, James Bond has become an emerging theme at Waspy costume parties—probably because guests can dress exactly the way they always do and still think of themselves as funky. The fashion aesthetic of the Bond films is embraced by only a couple of brave girls who packed themselves voluptuously into slinky gold or silver lamé. There are two adolescent-looking Blofelds in the bunch, both sporting painted-on facial scars and carrying stuffed white cats. But no Goldfingers or Dr. Nos. Most of the fresh-faced young women wear little black cocktail dresses and the inevitable strand of pearls. Most of the men have opted for black tie. Some carry toy guns.

Bond-movie themes flood the rooms during cocktails and dinner, and guests are assigned, bar mitzvah–style, to tables named after the movies, i.e., *Thunderball, Moonraker, Live and Let Die.* Dressed in black velvet and installed at the *Diamonds Are Forever* table, Cornelia presides proudly over her party, blushing deeply when a busboy wheels in a giant cake and everyone sings "Happy Birthday." In a separate room, Mrs. Hallingby—who received a multi-million-dollar settlement when she divorced Wall Street banker Paul Hallingby a few years ago—entertains her own buddies at two tables of ten, including Senator Alfonse D'Amato and his current girlfriend, socialite Hilary Geary; philanthropist David Mahoney and his wife, Hillie; and developer Richard LeFrak.

In the main room, the kids chatter brightly about each other. At the grown-up table, Al D'Amato holds forth on George Pataki's future. Dancing begins immediately after the main course: The D.J. serves up a curious mix of Sinatra standards and Donna Summer classics.

After dessert, in the best Bondian tradition, out come the cigars. Despite the paucity of imaginative costumes, there is a halfhearted contest moderated by the socialite Marquette de Bary. The winner: Miss Catherine Sitrick, who takes home a toy BMW for her homage to Pussy Galore—a *faux*-leopard-skin jumpsuit and boots—which looks awfully Miss Porter's.

DAVID PATRICK COLUMBIA

CHELSEA, 6 A.M.

The End OF THE WORLD CAFE

BEYOND THE GLASS FRONT of the Chelsea Square restaurant, Ninth Avenue is desolate and the sky has paled into an icy cobalt dome. But it's warm in here, everyone sits close together in the booths, and no one looks out the windows.

"Perfect night," says Dennis, a 40-year-old agent in a leather vest and no shirt. "We went to the Lure and then to the Spike." "It's the leather circuit," explains David, 34, an actor-director, similarly attired. "Took a disco nap around eight, then we cruised, drank, and had a lot of personal drama."

Across from David, Leigh, a travel agent from L.A., examines their bill and smiles without looking up. "Tonight, we found out about dead friends who we didn't even know were dead." David taps the rim of his mug with his spoon. "I did a bump of coke tonight," he says. Leigh nods his head, still staring at the bill. "Well, I guess it was three bumps, but I did them at one time." "A triple lutz," says Leigh. "I'm drugless tonight—that's my new M.O." Their conversation lulls. Throughout the diner no one seems to manage more than two sentences in a row, but forks and knives remain in constant motion. Sometimes a point is made in an argument that ended hours ago: "*Would've fucked* and *fucked* are different," says a guy in a black vinyl shirt and Caesar cut to the girl across from him, who has been pretending to eat a waffle. At the next booth, Carlos Perzabal, who runs the Mexican magazine *Rino,* slices a hunk off his prime rib. Next to Perzabal is Marissa Marina, creative director of *Una,* a women's magazine, also ravishing a steak. Tonight they've been to *Les Mis,* Domingo, and the Copa.

Suddenly, two feet down the aisle, a brawl erupts. A table of dark-skinned Jamaicans has gotten into it with some light-skinned Jamaicans seated across the aisle. All eight are on their feet grabbing for each other as a waiter tries to separate them. The waiter isn't a day under 65, and he's hugging a six-foot-four Jamaican who's got a nice raised scar across his throat, telling him, "It's cool, it's okay." "We *not* cool!" replies the man with the scarred throat. "Anybody has something to say, I'll be outside." By the time the groups have reassembled on the sidewalk, three patrol cars have pulled up and the combatants slowly disperse. "They all left already," the manager tells one of the cops. A yard away Scarthroat starts up his Civic and takes off.

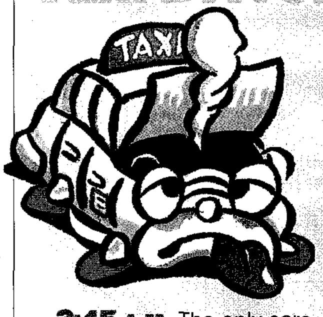
"In here, people stop that from going on," says Nick, a 26-year-old promoter for the Roxy, Expo, and Mantra. "People care about this place." "Yeah, when you're in your twenties and you're drunk and you want to eat, you don't need complications," adds Mai. Mai's 26, a strikingly beautiful AT&T Wireless consultant. She, Nick, and their two friends have been at Nick's "100 Percent Pure" party at the Roxy all night, and Mai has been drinking water ever since to counteract the Long Island Ice Teas she's consumed. In five hours, she has to pick up her 2-year-old at her ex-husband's. "I'm going to do the parent thing," Mai says. "I'm going to listen to her play the dinosaur piano."

By now, the sun's up, though it's not very lovely through the clouds. The street is bathed in an isolating colorless light—the kind of sunrise no one gets out of bed to see.

IAN SPIEGELMAN

"When you're in your twenties and you're drunk and you want to eat, you don't want any complications," says Mai.

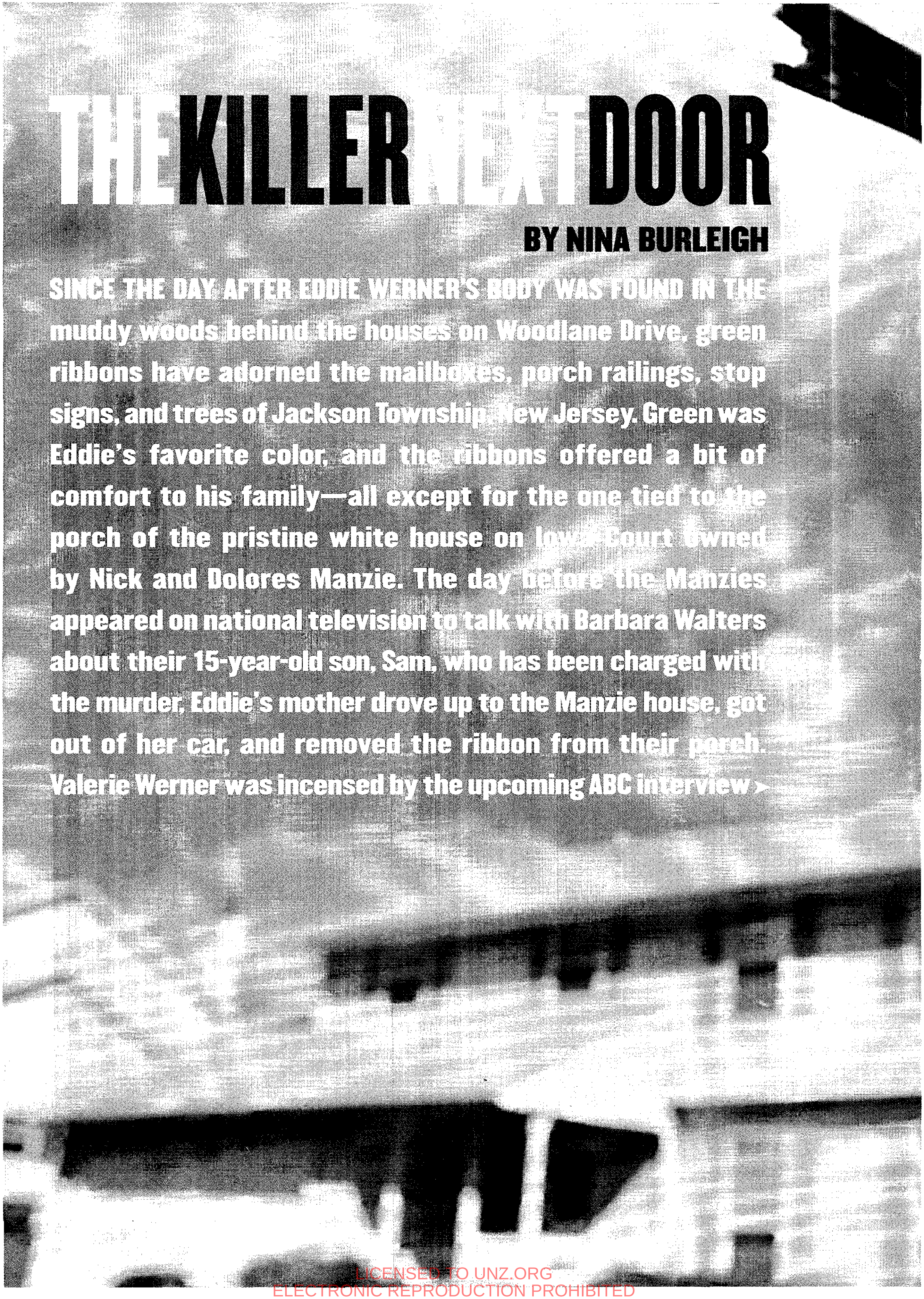
Taxi Driver



3:45 A.M. The only cars on Broadway below City Hall are cabs. We rattle down the empty streets past the sleeping radio-car drivers, and Moe Bats recalls the golden age of the cabby. He says he remembers picking up fares at the Garden, when it was at 50th Street and Eighth Avenue. He remembers when, in the early eighties, Second and Third Avenues were lined with salesmen looking for a cab, "like they was watching a parade, three-deep. But not anymore," says Bats, a sad fact he blames on the '87 crash and the rise of the computer.

Hoping to scare up one more fare, Bats parks the cab a block away from the crowd gathering at Goddesses. By day, this threadbare Chinese restaurant serves sweet-and-sour pork to office chattel. On Friday and Saturday nights from 9:30 to 3:30, it's transformed into a fat-girl-fetish bar that holds a Hot Buns contest, a male exotic-dance contest, an evening-gown contest, and a Sizzling Hot Lingerie Showcase. Tonight, as we make our way down Pearl Street, one Goddess has snuck down the alley with what the management at Goddesses calls an "admirer" and is all too publicly living out the fast-girl fantasies that evidently survived her high-school career. "Take me home, Moe," I say, staring down the alley. "I'm your last fare of the night."

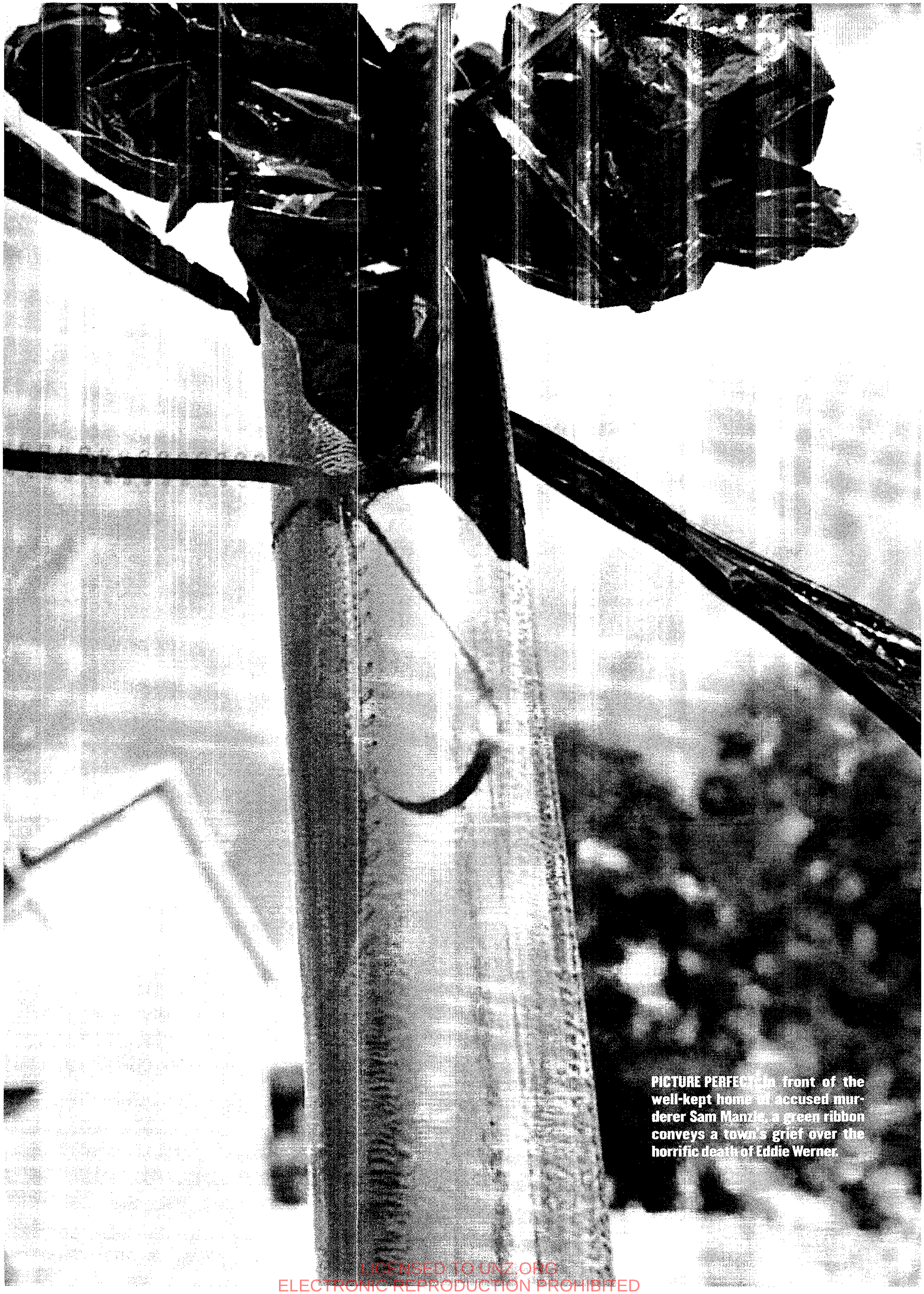
MANNY HOWARD



THE KILLER NEXT DOOR

BY NINA BURLEIGH

SINCE THE DAY AFTER EDDIE WERNER'S BODY WAS FOUND IN THE muddy woods behind the houses on Woodlane Drive, green ribbons have adorned the mailboxes, porch railings, stop signs, and trees of Jackson Township, New Jersey. Green was Eddie's favorite color, and the ribbons offered a bit of comfort to his family—all except for the one tied to the porch of the pristine white house on Iowa Court owned by Nick and Dolores Manzie. The day before the Manzies appeared on national television to talk with Barbara Walters about their 15-year-old son, Sam, who has been charged with the murder, Eddie's mother drove up to the Manzie house, got out of her car, and removed the ribbon from their porch. Valerie Werner was incensed by the upcoming ABC interview ➤



PICTURE PERFECT In front of the well-kept home of accused murderer Sam Manzie, a green ribbon conveys a town's grief over the horrific death of Eddie Werner.

and the press fascination with a teen who'd carried on a secret sexual relationship with a convicted pedophile.

"It's the press and media that's making this kid into a victim," Valerie Werner told me. "He's not a victim at all. He had a relationship with this guy, and he warned him. Is that being a victim? He had a relationship! I had to bury my 11-year-old son. He is no longer here. I have an empty bed in my house. My 6-year-old son will not go to sleep in the room he shared with his brother. My daughter is 9, and she's torn apart. *These* are the victims."

Yet new evidence suggests that Sam Manzie may have been more of a victim than Valerie Werner realizes. Last March, the Cyber Angels, an organization that functions on the Internet much as the Guardian Angels do in the streets, received the following e-mail from someone with the Internet moniker Sam82: *Subject 15/M needs help. When I was fourteen I had met a man in person four times, having sex with him all of the time and taking drugs from him two of the times. He was 42 and I was 14 at the time. I had met him at a private room on AOL. I realize now that even though it was all consensual, what he did to me was wrong and I want to do something about it. I know he meets many teen guys from online and I know he has sex with them too. He has to be stopped. I don't talk to him much anymore and I want to do something about it. But my problem is I don't know what to do and I doubt I'd be able to prove it. I hope you can help me with this because I don't know what else to do. Please respond.*

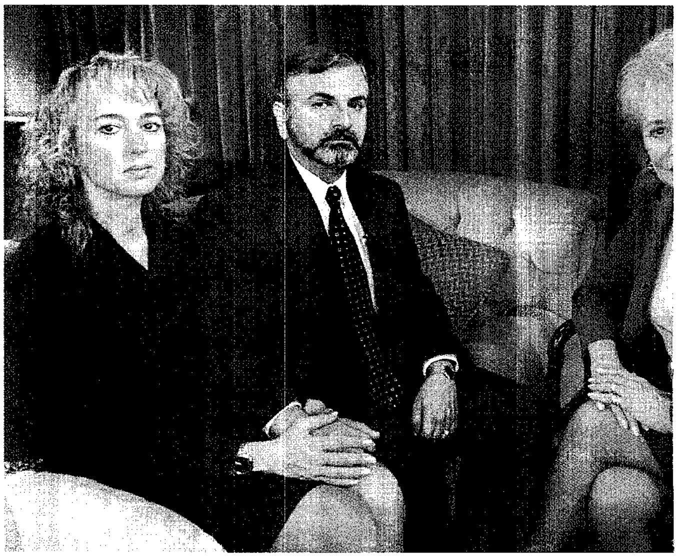
The Cyber Angels never responded directly to Sam82 but passed the e-mail along to a California-based group called Safeguarding Our Children United Mothers (SOCUM), which monitors Internet pedophiles. SOCUM sent the e-mail on to Innocent Images, an FBI task force on child pornography based in Baltimore. When a member of that group followed up with a phone call to the FBI a few weeks later, she was told the FBI didn't comment on open cases. Only after Sam Manzie was arrested did SOCUM and the Cyber Angels learn that Sam82 was one of the nicknames Sam used on America Online.

"FBI Baltimore has assisted in this investigation in the past. That's all we can say, because it's an ongoing investigation," says Special Agent Larry Foust of the Baltimore FBI office.

THE LAST TIME VALERIE WERNER SAW HER oldest child alive was around midday on Saturday, September 27, as he headed off to sell candy and wrapping paper for the Christa McAuliffe Middle School. By that night, the boy had been raped, murdered, stuffed into a suitcase, and dumped in the woods. His 60-pound body was found two days later.

The day after that, Dolores Manzie heard a rumor that a 19-year-old had been arrested. She was relieved; when Eddie disappeared, she had confronted Sam about it. He admitted seeing the boy Saturday afternoon but denied knowing anything more. Dolores, who had been away that day, had reason to be worried. She knew her son was deeply disturbed. Hearing that a murderer had been apprehended, she went upstairs to Sam's bedroom. The skinny six-footer sat on his bed, his ever-present Discman pumping the music of his favorite band, the Smashing Pumpkins, into his brain. She told him the killer had been found.

"So he gives her this confused look, like 'What? Something's wrong here,' " one Jackson Township police officer recalled. "And when she saw that look, she knew." By the time she phoned the police, Sam had confessed to killing the boy when he had come to the door selling candy in the late afternoon. He even showed her a Polaroid he'd taken of the body. When the police arrived, they found the necktie and clock-radio cord Sam had used to kill Eddie and the suitcase he'd used to carry the body across the street. The Manzie house was always neat as a pin. Sam had put everything back in its place.



SAM MANZIE TALKED OPENLY

TALKED TO US," SAID DETECTI

DURING THE TWO MONTHS HE HAS SPENT AT THE OCEAN COUNTY JUvenile Detention Center, Sam Manzie has been disintegrating. He sliced up his arms with an aluminum dessert tray and attempted to strangle himself with a pair of thermal pants. He had to be handcuffed and shackled after he continually punched the door and walls of his room. Small noises send him into a frenzy. He mistook a defense psychiatrist for his attorney. The Detention Center has placed him on a suicide watch.

But Sam's unraveling actually began in December 1996, after his last known meeting with Stephen Simmons, a 43-year-old Englishman whose penchant for boys had earned him two sex-crime convictions before Sam met him in an online chat room for gay teenagers. Sam's grades dropped. A priest at his Catholic boys' school told the Manzies their son needed psychiatric help. By March, the boy had stopped going to school altogether. From

Photographs: previous page, Jeff Zelevansky/AP/Wide World; this page, clockwise from top right, Daniel Hulshizer/AP/Wide World; Maria Melin/ABC; AP/Wide World.

DISPARATE GRIEF: Valerie and Ed Werner (left) at the funeral of their son Eddie (far left). In a television interview, Nick and Dolores Manzie (below left) spoke with Barbara Walters about their son.

then on, Sam's contact with people his age was limited to the Internet, where he communicated with other fans of the Smashing Pumpkins, carefully writing out lyrics. Among his favorites was a song called "Silverfuck," with the line "I don't trust anyone," and "Siva," which cries, "Way down deep within my heart lies a soul that's torn apart."

The Manzies finally took Sam to the school-recommended therapist in July. That therapist saw him twice and decided the boy needed more care than he could provide. He sent the Manzies to the Shoreline Behavioral Health Center in Toms River. In August, Sam began an intensive program of individual and group therapy five days a week, five and a half hours a day. He was also put on Paxil, a drug prescribed for depression with obsessive-compulsive disorder. After a month at Shoreline, Sam told therapists about his relationship with Simmons. When they notified police, as required by law, three investigators teamed up to work the case. Despite his braces, acne, and cracking voice, the young man answering their questions seemed unusually sophisticated and mature. "He was very detailed in his descriptions," Howell Township detective Guy Arancio recalls. Sam asked only that his parents not be told the specifics. "To this day," Arancio says, "his parents don't know exactly what he did with Simmons."

As Sam's life was coming apart, the Manzies were facing other pressures while doing everything they could to keep up appearances. They were five months behind on the payments for their $146,000 house; in mid-July, a mortgage company began foreclosure proceedings. To make ends meet—to pay for Sam's treatment and the private-school tuition for their children—Dolores Manzie cleaned houses. She and her husband organized bus trips to Foxwoods Casino for bingo games, for which they received a commission. Meanwhile, Sam was spending most of his time holed up in his bedroom; if he emerged, he was unapproachable. One night, he threw a remote control at his dad and missed, denting the wall. "The look in his eyes when he was looking at me was—was one of, *I was terrified,*" Nick Manzie later said. "He looked as if he really wanted to hurt me bad." That night, Nick Manzie took his son to a crisis center, but he says psychiatrists there decided "he doesn't [*sic*] appear to them that he would cause any harm."

H THE POLICE ABOUT HIS SEXUAL CONFUSION. "I THINK HE ANCIO, "IN A WAY THAT HE COULDN'T TALK TO HIS FATHER."

JACKSON TOWNSHIP IS A FAMILY KIND OF PLACE, where wholesome amusement is easy to find. A few miles up Route 157 from Sam Manzie's house, there's a Paintball outlet, where war games are played with guns that shoot paint, and the Swingtime Family Fun Center, with its green acres of batting cages. Just over the county line is Six Flags Great Adventure Theme Park and Safari, where Willie Nelson, Wynonna, and the Beach Boys performed last summer.

Sam Manzie had no use for the usual teen pastimes. The basketball hoop his father had put up in the driveway went unused. On the few occasions when Sam was talked into playing football, he was gleefully drilled into the ground by his neighbors. "Everybody picked on him," a 15-year-old neighbor told the *Trentonian*. "He was like the wuss of the crew." Neighbor kids taunted him as "Manzie the Pansy."

Sam dyed his hair black and often dressed all in black. He thought he might be bisexual. He retreated into the antiseptic world of cyberspace and had no friends his own age. He sometimes beat up on small children.

By his own count, Sam made 56 trips to Six Flags last year to play a laser-tag game called Q-Zar. He wielded a plastic laser weapon designed to look like an Uzi and became Xspaceboy1, which happened to be one of his Internet aliases. The theme park also provided a rendezvous point for Sam and Stephen Simmons. Simmons, who operated a T-shirt business on Long Island, made a practice of "counseling" gay teens in an online chat room called "Boyz" (which America Online shut down immediately after Simmons's involvement with Sam became known).

Police who have read the e-mail exchanges between Simmons and Sam say the older man deftly romanced the boy. "He gained his trust slowly," says one officer. Sam started out by communicating with Simmons about his confusion over his sexual identity. Over a period of months, the Internet exchanges grew more explicit. Simmons was first a friend, then a trusted confidant, then the repository of Sam's sexual fantasies.

On a Saturday afternoon in August 1996, Sam had his father drop him off at the Freehold Raceway Mall and told him to come back in an hour. His father didn't know it, but the 14-year-old had agreed to meet Simmons in the food court between Nordstrom and Macy's. When Nick Manzie returned to pick up his son, Sam was nowhere to be found.

The Manzies searched the mall's six-theater multiplex and the nearby woods. That night, they filed a missing-persons report with police. At about three o'clock the next afternoon, Sam called his mother from the mall. He told her he'd run away because someone he was supposed to meet had stood him up. According to the authorities, Sam willingly spent the weekend at Simmons's Long Island house, where the balding, dark-haired man with a double chin and beer gut had initiated him into man-boy sex.

Over the next six months, while Sam was a freshman at the Christian Brothers Academy in Middletown Township, he and Simmons met for at least three more trysts, in motels along Route 9 and in Manzie's home when his parents and older sister were away. Simmons took a set of pornographic Polaroids of Sam, keeping one copy for himself and giving one copy to Sam. Police are still uncertain whether the pictures circulated beyond the two of them: A plan to "share" Sam with Simmons's roommate was thwarted when the roommate abruptly moved to Florida, Sam told investigators.

Sam felt a bond with Simmons. He told a social worker that he compared his relationship with Simmons to that of any boy with a girlfriend of whom his parents disapproved. Friendship was important to the lonely teen. "A true friend is hard to find, but once you have found one, the friendship can last forever," Sam wrote on his Web page. "A true friend will stick by you, even when the popular crowd doesn't."

Detective Arancio finally came to realize that what was abuse in the eyes of the law was also a love affair in the boy's mind. "I said to Sam, 'You have feelings for this guy, and you feel bad about what's happening to him, right?' And he agreed," Arancio says. "I guess I realized then that he really loved the guy. It was more than a sexual-fantasy thing for him."

The last meeting police documented was in December 1996. That month, Sam's parents had noticed Simmons's phone number on their bill—to the tune of $300 worth of calls. When Nick Manzie called Simmons to find out who he was, Simmons lied, replying that Sam was helping him with a computer problem. Suspicious nevertheless, Manzie demanded that Simmons cease contact with his son. In the only interview the parents have given since the murder, Nick Manzie told Barbara Walters that he never actually asked Sam about Simmons. "Maybe I didn't want to know," he admitted. Dolores Manzie did ask, but Sam only said that Simmons "was somebody he talked to occasionally."

Sam had discussed with his mother the possibility that he might be gay. "He had expressed to his mother some things about his sexuality," says Michael Critchley, the Manzies' lawyer. "She said, 'Whatever you are, you are. A lot of people have alternative lifestyles. Whatever road you choose will be tough.' " Dolores may have accepted her son's sexuality, but Nick was, by his own account, "devoted to Catholicism." Sam never talked about his sexuality with his dad. "I know he was tortured by it," Dolores Manzie told Barbara Walters.

THE MANZIES WERE PAYING $6,500 TUITION to send Sam to Christian Brothers Academy. The campus of the spacious all-boys school has ten soccer fields and a separate chapel. Sam took religious studies, English, world history, biology, health, Latin, and a personal-computer lab. He was quiet, a good student with one of the highest averages in his honors biology class, but he was suspended last spring, before the end of his freshman year. His mother said Sam "got sick" in March and missed so many days that he fell behind and stopped going to school. But Critchley admitted that certain "incidents" had compelled a priest on the staff to insist that Sam's parents take him to a psychiatrist before he would be allowed to return to school.

Home alone from then on, Xspaceboy1 advertised himself in three photographs on his Web page. He posted ruminations on his political philosophy ("conservative") and on his all-male school: "The liberals might call me sexist, but they should take a look at one of the major reasons that people who share their opinion want girls in CBA: They want to have something to stare at during those long, boring 41-minute periods." Xspaceboy1 also posted his religious philosophy. "Since halfway through kindergarten I have been attending private Catholic schools . . . my current theory on God (which is apt to change a lot) is similar to Billy Corgan's—I don't care if he exists & if he does I don't think he cares if I care that he exists."

DOLORES CAME TO PICK HIM UP, HYSTERICAL. SAM SHRUGG
DOES THAT ALL THE TIME," HE SAID. "THEN SHE GOES TO BE

The ontology of Billy Corgan, lead singer of the Smashing Pumpkins, had conflicted with the belief system at Sam's school, where wooden crucifixes greet students as they enter the main building. A sign above the door reads BE IT KNOWN FOR ALL WHO ENTER HERE THAT JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THIS SCHOOL. THE UNSEEN BUT EVER PRESENT TEACHER IN ITS CLASSES, THE MODEL OF ITS FACULTY AND THE INSPIRATION OF ITS STUDENTS.

Before Sam was 5, the Manzies had lived in California, Florida, and North Carolina, following Nick's jobs in trucking management. In November 1987, they bought the house on Iowa Court and moved in with their daughter, Nicolette, then 7, and Sam. Nick Manzie, who grew up in northern New Jersey, worked as a property-loss manager with New England Motor Freight. He believed that a private Catholic education was essential for his children. In 1993, Nick was seriously injured in an accident on the Garden State Parkway. The accident caused lasting injuries, including pain and burn scars, and kept him out of work for eleven months. At the time, his weekly salary was $1,228. He was prescribed painkillers and underwent physical therapy. He told neighbors he was expecting a large worker's-comp settlement.

AFTERMATH: Stephen Simmons (right) was charged in the sexual assault of Sam Manzie (left). After the murder of Eddie Werner, authorities inspected the Manzie home (below right).

Sam's freshman-year breakdown was not his first. In first grade at Holy Family School in Lakewood, a teacher alerted the Manzies to "some situation that required counseling," Critchley says. "Tests indicated Sam was hyperactive and had an overall atmosphere of sadness. They went for independent counseling, and he was deemed okay. Between then and his first year of high school, there was no intervention by mental-health people."

When the Manzies found out the truth about Stephen Simmons, they wanted him arrested and jailed. Dolores Manzie kept telling police that Sam "wants closure," but it was clearly her own desire as well. "I just want my son back," Nick Manzie told authorities. "We could not have gone into the home without their consent," says Arancio. Sam talked openly with the police about his sexual confusion. "He was trying to figure out whether he liked girls," says Arancio. "I think he talked to us in a way that he couldn't talk to his father."

THE INVESTIGATION AND STING OPERATION TARGETing Simmons began at the end of August. Sam initially agreed to let police use him as bait. For several days, Sam, clad in black from head to foot and wearing his Discman with the Smashing Pumpkins thumping inside his head, rode around in the backseat of a police cruiser, pointing out motels and sites at Great Adventure and the Freehold mall where he and Simmons had met. He waited inside the car while investigators approached desk clerks for receipts and records. Afterward, they took Sam out to eat at his favorite restaurant, the Olive Garden.

Police then attached a locked metal box with a tape recorder inside to Sam's bedroom phone, with Sam's apparent acquiescence. "The kid's cooperation was essential," says Monmouth County prosecutor John Kaye, whose office oversaw the investigation and will prosecute Simmons. "First of all, he's gonna have to act natural; second, he's gonna have to ask questions that elicit information." During September, Sam Manzie initiated two recorded telephone conversations with Simmons in the presence of police officers. The first call was aimed at establishing that Simmons knew Manzie's age. The second was an attempt to lure Simmons to New Jersey, where police intended to nab him.

But during the weekend of September 21, Sam smashed the locked metal box, destroyed the tape, and tipped off Simmons. He then told therapists what he'd done, and they called his parents and the police. Monmouth County authorities had enough evidence by then to charge Simmons without Sam's cooperation.

When Dolores came to pick Sam up at Shoreline on Monday, September 22, she was hysterical. Psychiatrists and social workers were more concerned about her than about Sam. "She was threatening to kill herself," says one social worker. Therapists at Shoreline sent mother and son over to the county's Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) for evaluation. "It was really *Mom* having a crisis," says a person familiar with the PESS report. "PESS decided to give her a rest, give her a night away from Sam. They were actually trying to get her into counseling and get *her* admitted."

In an interview with therapists at PESS, Sam shrugged off his mother's suicide threats. "She does that all the time," he told them. "Then she goes to bed, and in the morning she's fine."

F HER SUICIDE THREATS. "SHE
IN THE MORNING SHE'S FINE."

Sam also told county psychiatrists that he liked Simmons and that everything he had done with the older man was consensual. "He thought he was having a relationship," says one person who interviewed him. "He thought of himself as a teenager with a girlfriend his parents just didn't agree to. He felt his parents were developing their own type of rage."

Sam spent that night at the county psychiatric-screening facility. The following day, Nick Manzie returned with Nicolette from a trip visiting colleges for her. Sam wanted to go home, but his father wouldn't take him.

SINCE HIS PARENTS REFUSED TO BRING HIM HOME, SAM WAS TAKEN to the county children's shelter, Harbor House in Toms River, where he spent another night. He could not stay longer, because the shelter has an unofficial policy not to house children on psychotropic drugs. The next day, Wednesday—the same day that Stephen Simmons was arrested and charged with sexual assault—Sam and his parents faced family court judge James Citta in a hearing that was later incorrectly described in press reports as a commitment proceeding.

The Ocean County Family Crisis system commonly sees domestic violence that leaves black eyes and broken bones. In the case of Sam Manzie, however, the judge and social workers saw a middle-class family with a sexually confused teen who had done nothing more violent than hurl a remote control in his father's direction. Nick and Dolores never mentioned any of the "incidents" at Christian Brothers Academy, although Nick said a psychiatrist had recommended 24-hour care for Sam. Parents and child appeared emotionless and controlled before the judge. "They were too mechanical," says one observer. "Particularly Dad. He was telling it like he was reading it out of the telephone book."

In a now-notorious exchange, Judge Citta sent Sam home with his parents after lecturing the Manzies ("Throwing money at a problem, it's my experience, it doesn't necessarily solve it") and giving Sam a speech straight out of *Boys Town.* "I have little tolerance for wise guys," he told the teen. "You know the difference between doing the right thing and doing the wrong thing, and that's what life comes down to. You know the difference, don't you? I can't hear you." Sam replied: "Yes."

The Thursday and Friday after that hearing, Sam behaved himself at home. "Even brought his dishes over to the dishwasher, which he hadn't done in years," Nick Manzie recalled. On Saturday, Eddie Werner knocked on the door of the house on Iowa Court.

MICHAEL CRITCHLEY IS KNOWN IN OCEAN County for defending Martin Taccetta in the 1993 mob murder of Vincent "Jimmy Sinatra" Craparotta. After Sam's arrest, Critchley kicked off a public-relations blitz aimed at portraying Sam Manzie and his parents as victims. "We are examining his entire life right now," Critchley says. "He was at a couple of day-care centers in California and North Carolina that we are looking at."

The possibility of previous abuse is supported by psychiatrists and social workers. "Sam believed he knew the difference between abuse and rape and consensual sex," says a social worker who spoke with him before the murder. "My professional opinion was he had been subjected to abuse before the Internet meeting. If he knew the difference between rape and consensual sex, you have to wonder how."

Critchley says the removal of the green ribbon from the Manzies' porch preceded several incidents of harassment. He also says that around Halloween, their caller I.D. displayed the Werners' number for a hang-up on the Manzie home telephone. Another caller left the message "Your son is a monster." Police warned the Manzies of threats that their home would be firebombed on Halloween, and guarded it for two nights. The Manzies have since put the house up for sale.

The Ocean County prosecutor's office has vowed to try Sam Manzie as an adult. Under New Jersey's "Joan's law," named for a 7-year-old rape-murder victim, anyone convicted of murder and aggravated sexual assault of a child may be sentenced to life in prison without parole. In January, a judge will rule on whether Manzie will be tried as an adult.

Stephen Simmons is at the Monmouth County Jail in Freehold, still awaiting indictment. He faces 46 years in prison if convicted on all nine counts. In a jailhouse interview with the New York *Post,* he tearfully charged that authorities who masterminded the failed sting shared the blame for Sam Manzie's murderous act.

Sam Manzie will spend the months between now and January at the Ocean County Juvenile Detention Center. The center has no jail cells. Its bedrooms have brightly colored plastic furniture and lots of glass to let in light, according to administrator Robert Coughlin, who says that no matter what the juveniles are charged with, rehabilitation is always the goal. Sam has daily chores, along with about 40 other kids, and continues to get psychiatric counseling. When he's well enough, he has school eight hours a day. The education programs are on computers, but the computers have no modems. He will turn 16 in February. ■

Photographs: top, Charles Rex Arbogast/AP/Wide World; middle, Jeff Zelevansky/AP/Wide World; bottom, AP/Wide World.

BEST BETS

The best of all possible things to buy, see, and do in the best of all possible cities

BY CORKY POLLAN

Soft Touch

Sleepy and a tad scruffy, Elizabeth Street might seem a surprising venue for Lucien Pellat-Finet and his $1,500 four-ply cashmere sweaters. But Pellat-Finet is not hidebound by the expected. The French designer, a former model, got into cashmere sweaters about five years ago; when Tom Cruise wore Pellat-Finet's black-and-white-striped number to the premiere of *Mission: Impossible,* the Parisian's career took off. Unlike most others around, Pellat-Finet's sweaters don't scream *cashmere.* They're understated yet far from classic and not really radical. It's Pellat-Finet's educated color sense and his close-to-the-body styling that set them apart (from $485 for a two-ply T-shirt to $665 for a two-ply men's sweater to $3,255 for a double-faced cashmere jeans jacket).

LUCIEN PELLAT-FINET/*226 Elizabeth Street/343-7033*

Put a Fork on It

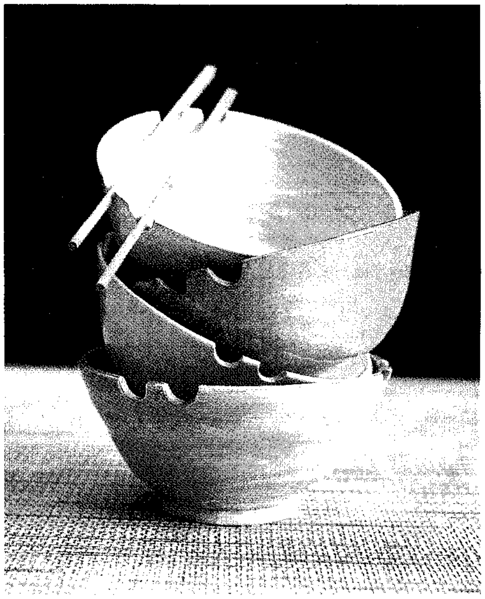
Enzo Mari, one of Italy's primo industrial, graphics, and product designers, has turned his multiple talents to the pesky problem of storage. Having done everything from bookshelves to olive-oil dispensers, he has now devised a compact cutlery system. It's a stainless-steel service for six (forks, knives, tablespoons, and teaspoons) that hangs neatly from a stainless-steel stand. Mari's polished satin flatware is so stylish that it goes far beyond the needs of space saving ($285).

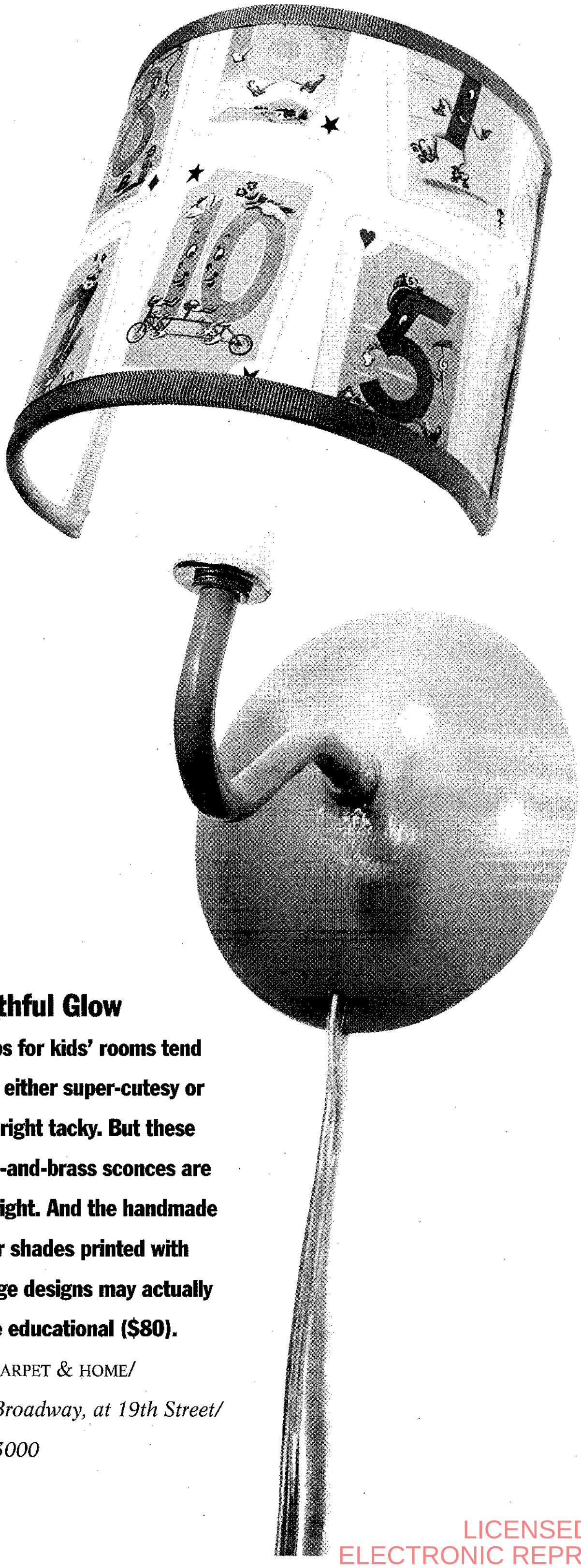
MOSS/*146 Greene Street/226-2190*

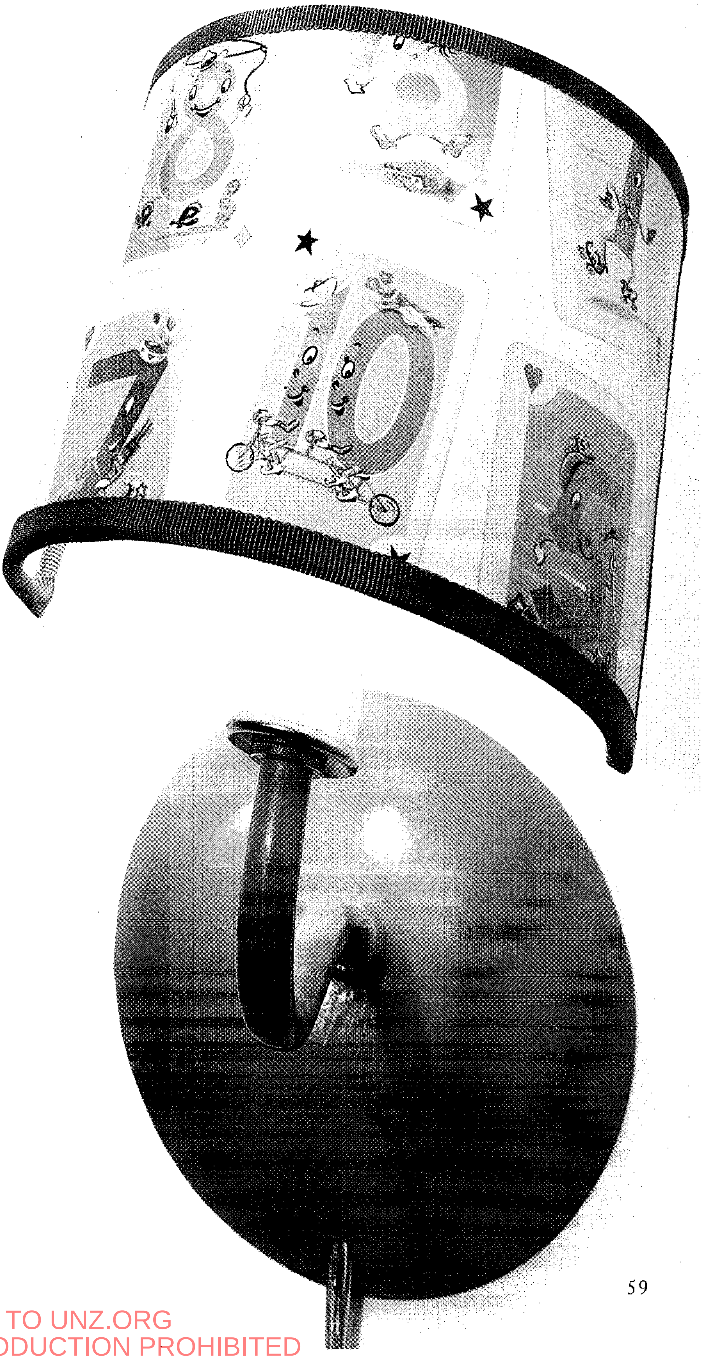
Bowled Over

White or brown, rice is sure to look festive in these cheery bowls. They're hand-thrown and hand-painted by New Jersey potter Cathy King, who's obviously a Chinese-food junkie—her bowls have built-in chopstick rests ($26; natural-wood chopsticks included).

PRUDENCE DESIGNS/*235 West 18th Street/691-1356*







Youthful Glow

Lamps for kids' rooms tend to be either super-cutesy or downright tacky. But these wood-and-brass sconces are just right. And the handmade paper shades printed with vintage designs may actually prove educational ($80).

ABC CARPET & HOME/
888 Broadway, at 19th Street/
473-3000

ONDINE COHANE

Group Shows

The gang's all here: *Six vintage-photo dealers join up; Collective Elite shows off its accumulated talents; and* **top furniture designers** *assemble for a good cause.*

WHILE VERA WANG'S LEGENDARY wedding-dress sample sale can please only a small percentage of the female population, at her eveningwear sale everyone gets to indulge. Dresses now priced at $200: short black piqué dress, was $855; short bronze silk crêpe dress, was $855; short chocolate silk-crêpe dress, was $1,100. *Vera Wang, 251 W. 39th St., third floor (575-6400); A.E., M.C., V., checks; Wed.–Thurs. 10–7; 12/3–12/4.*

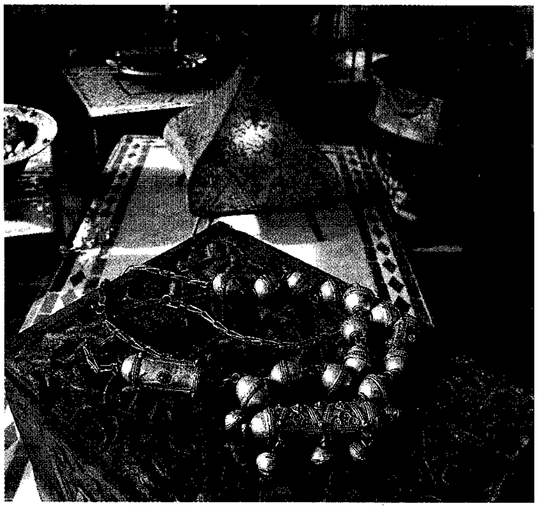
Metro Matters

THE DESIGNERS AT METROPOLITAN'S SALE usually supply high-end stores like Barneys New York and Bergdorf Goodman, but now they're making their wares available direct to shoppers at much lower prices. Velvet and silk scarves, retail $25–$250, here $10–$95; decorative pillows and throws, retail $40–$650, here $15–$250. *Metropolitan Design Group, 80 W. 40th St., eighth floor (944-6110); cash only; Thurs. 8–7, Fri. till 3; 12/4–12/5.*

Double Exposure

TWO SALES FOR PHOTO LOVERS—AT PHOTOcollect's once-a-year holiday photography sale, Ansel Adams's prints, were $1,200–$3,500, now $900–$2,500; Karl Blossfeldt's photogravure plates, were $125–$200, now $90–$150. Meanwhile, converging at the Sarah Morthland Gallery—situated in an 1860s townhouse—are six dealers selling nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographic art ranging from less than $25 to more than $1,000. *Photocollect, 740 West End Ave., at 96th St. (222-7381); A.E., M.C., V., checks; Wed. and Fri.–Sun. noon–6, Thurs. till 9; 12/5 (from 5 P.M.)–12/21. Sarah Morthland Gallery, 225 Tenth Ave., near 23rd St. (242-7767); M.C., V., checks; Fri. 4–9, Sat. 10–6, Sun. 11–5; 12/12–12/14.*

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Ondine Cohane, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, six weeks before the sale. Only sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be considered.



Tiled up: Moroccan mosaics at Thé à la Menthe.

French Flavors

DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR NEXT VISIT TO THE Continent to add some French flair to a Big Apple Christmas. Check out Pierre Frey's annual sample sale, which brims with bedspreads, china, frames, throws, and photo albums at 20 percent off wholesale. *Excelsior Hotel, 45 W. 81st St. (362-9200; ask for Roseline Crowley); checks accepted; Wed. 9–6; 12/3.*

Chair People

FURNITURE NEW YORK'S HOLIDAY SALE INcludes designs by Altura Studios, Burning Relic, and Evan Hughes Furniture, among others, with a percentage of sales going to the Partnership for the Homeless. Stephen Whisler's domino armoire, retail $5,000, here $3,900; Fire & Water's calla-lily table lamp, retail $390, here $245. Preview tickets for first night are $5. *Blue Fish, 150 Greene St. (677-7291); M.C., V.; Wed. 6–9, Thurs.–Sat. 11–7, Sun. 12–6; 12/4–12/7.*

Aude of All Trades

THE COSTUME DESIGNER AUDE BRONSON-Howard has just wrapped her latest film—*Meet Joe Black* with Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins. Her other career, and her true love, consists of making luxury accessories. At her holiday showroom sale: scarves, retail $350, here $200–$250; pashmina shawls from Nepal, retail $600–$700, here $300–$325; vintage-fabric pillows, retail $300–$600, here $175–$300. *ABH Design, 153 E. 61st St., third floor (688-3764); A.E., M.C., V., checks; Mon.–Fri. 10:30–7; 12/1–12/31.*

Menthe to Be

MOROCCO HAS BEEN ENJOYING "it" status of late—if the swarms at restaurants like Chez es Saada are any barometer—and Moroccan décor has a following of its own. Nadia Nassif's showroom sale overflows with great items from this part of the world. Perfume bottles, retail $55, here $35; pillows, retail $100–$120, here $40–$50. *Thé à la Menthe, 236 W. 26th St., Suite 1002 (675-4651); checks accepted; Mon.–Sun. 1–7; 12/2–12/14.*

Collect Yourself

A ONE-STOP SPOT FOR YOUR SHOPPING LIST, Collective Elite has 40 designers at its annual holiday sale. For example, Conchi silk-and-velvet scarves, retail $120, here $40; Jane Bohan sterling-silver-and-eighteen-karat-gold link bracelet, retail $770, here $350. (Bring a new toy to benefit several local charities and hospitals.) *The Collective Elite, Parsons School of Design, 560 Seventh Ave., at 40th St.; cash only; Wed. 12–6, Thurs. 10–7, Fri. 10–6; 12/3–12/5.*

Lenox Thrill

FOUNDED IN 1894, LENOX HILL NEIGHBORhood House has programs for children, homebound adults, and the homeless. Its holiday-bazaar fund-raiser includes designer clothing, gift baskets, and antiques. Adolfo suits, retail $200–$500, here $50–$85; evening dresses (Dior, Valentino, Armani), retail $2,000–$5,000, here $75–$120. Entrance to Saturday's half-price sale is $3. *Lenox Hill Neighborhood*

Photograph by Warren Salowe.

House, 331 E. 70th St. (744-5022, ext. 355); A.E., M.C., V.; Thurs. and Sat. 11–4, Fri. till 7; 12/4–12/6.

World on Your Shoulders

ALL OF TOTE LE MONDE'S BAGS—DAY BAGS in leather and suede and evening ones with sterling handles and beaded satin—are now on sale at deep discount, as are suede and leather shirts. Prices, retail $15–$400, are here $5–$170. *Tote Le Monde, 305 W. 20th St. (951-7140); M.C., V.; daily 11–7; 12/4–12/14.*

Hey Diddel Diddel

KATHA DIDDEL HOME IS LOWERING PRICES on everything from its trademark pillows to stockings and ornaments. For example, large pillows, retail $200–$400, here $90–$100; rugs, retail $200–$4,000, here $50–$1,500. *Katha Diddel Home Collection, Hotel Delmonico, 502 Park Ave., at 59th St.; A.E., M.C., V.; Tues.–Thurs. 9–7; 12/2–12/4.*

In the Mix

STERLING-SILVER JEWELRY, SEMIPRECIOUS stones, scarves, shawls, hats, and clips by fifteen designers make up the wares at Couture Cafe. All prices are at least half off retail. *Couture Cafe, 431 Fifth Ave., near 39th St., fifth floor; A.E., M.C., V., checks; Mon.–Wed. 10–6; Thurs. till 7, Fri. 10–4; 12/2–12/12.*

Getting Warmer

ANTI-FUR TYPES SHOULD ABANDON THIS item right here, but for those who do indulge, SKS is having a sale on its luxury coats; prices usually start at $600, now starting at $325. *SKS Fashion, 345 Seventh Ave., near 30th St., eleventh floor (736-1519); A.E.; Mon.–Fri. 9–5, Sat.–Sun. 11–5; 12/1–12/7.* ▬

Must-Have **Sink into Area's sample sale, where prices for bedding (and bath and kitchen items) are more than 50 percent off retail.** ***180 Varick Street, ninth floor (924-7084); checks accepted; Tues.–Wed. and Fri. 10–6, Thurs. till 8; 12/2–12/5.***

Photograph by Matthew Salacuse.

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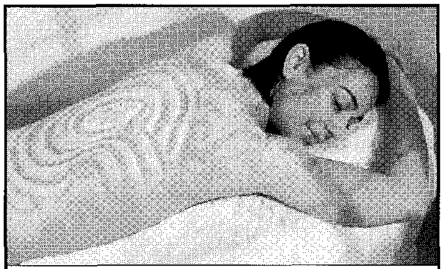

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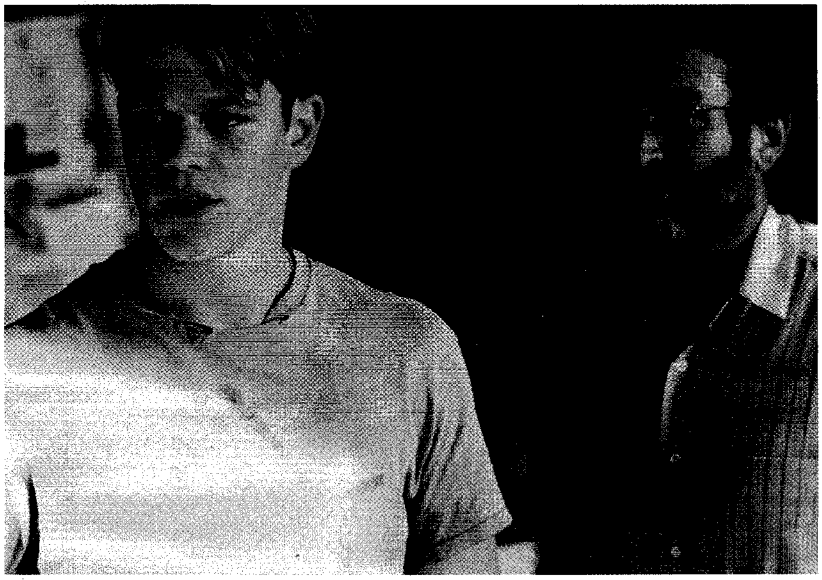
Matt City

Matt Damon shows range, playing a genius ('Good Will Hunting') and a lawyer ('The Rainmaker'); a so-so 'One Night Stand.'



Shrink and shrinkee: Robin Williams (right) with Damon in *Good Will Hunting*.

EARLY IN THE MORNING, IN **Good Will Hunting,** Chuckie (Ben Affleck) raps on the door at the ratty house of his friend Will Hunting (Matt Damon) and silently hands him a cup of coffee. The two men—20 years old and lifers in the Irish working-class neighborhood of South Boston—head off to their jobs in construction or maintenance. At night, Chuckie and Will drink with a couple of friends at a neighborhood pub, and the four of them, a white-boy gang—Southies—drive around in an old car, cruising the neighborhood, egging one another on to brilliant flights of profanity. They get into brawls, and Will, at least, has been arrested again and again. The movie was written by Affleck and Damon, who grew up together in Cambridge. The two actors seem to walk together in mutual rhythm; they share such an easy, slangy rapport onscreen that they can slip sideways into conversation, speaking in fragments—a helter-skelter grace that Gus Van Sant, the director, reinforces with speed and spontaneity, with rapidly changing moods, half-told jokes, rage that boils up out of nowhere and rapidly drops away. The pleasures these two men share bond them together; adolescent recklessness bonds them, too. Thirty years could slip away without a beat. They have only one immensely troubling problem. Will Hunting is a genius.

No education to speak of, but a photographic memory, an easy way with excruciatingly difficult problems in advanced mathematics, a detailed knowledge of history picked up from library books—there's something mysterious (and not always believable) about Will's divine gray matter, but we go along with the movie's premise, because Affleck and Damon work it for a new kind of ironic realism. At least Will wasn't bounced on the noggin by God like Travolta in *Phenomenon.* What if an extraordinary mind was put into the body of an orphaned, abused Southie, a boy contemptuous of career and status, a boy with a violent streak—even a bit of a thug? Mopping up at M.I.T., Will casually solves problems left on the blackboards, problems intended to stump the best mathematical minds in America. The formidable Professor Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgard), recognizing Will's uncanny talent, takes the boy under his wing, keeping him out of jail by agreeing to get him into therapy. Will lands in the office of Lambeau's old friend and rival Sean McGuire (Robin Williams), a bit of a screw-up himself, a damaged man, grief-stricken and defensive, but perhaps the one shrink in Boston who can understand Will. The boy doesn't want to be "saved." He wants to be left alone.

Matt Damon's Will has a careless mop of hair, funny ears, a big-toothed smile. He's halfway between beauty and ugliness, and there's something disturbing about him, stirrings of consciousness and pain beneath the working-class boy's cocky façade. Will is vain about his intellectual powers, and even more vain about his ability to throw away his "potential" like a used condom. He's above striving for what other people want. Three people turn themselves inside out trying to help him: Lambeau, Sean McGuire, and the beautiful and funny Harvard senior (Minnie Driver) he negligently attracts during a trip to a Cambridge bar. He repels them all; he even has a mean streak—he attacks the weak spot of anyone who tries to break through his bravado.

Good Will Hunting (the title, of course, is a pun) starts out brilliantly. Affleck, Damon, and Van Sant don't condescend to the Southies, but they don't sentimentalize them, either. There's enormous vitality to their lives, but they are trapped, partly by Boston's class divisions, partly by apathy and fear (i.e., "pride"). Will clings to a romantic working-class leftism; he convinces himself that success is corrupting. At its best, this movie lays open the conflicts within smart people, the conflicts that make them cranky, ornery human beings. Not only does Will fight with his shrink, but Sean and Lambeau, their relationship unresolved, go at each other like middleweights. This movie has wit and temperament to burn—there isn't a dead scene in it anywhere. Gus Van Sant may no longer be as original a hipster-artist as he was in the days of *Drugstore Cowboy* and *My Own Private Idaho,* but he has gained in coherence and accountability. In the end, however, he's betrayed by the script, which takes a disastrous turn toward conventionality. Shrink and patient fall into each other's arms, just as Judd Hirsch and Timothy Hutton did in *Ordinary People.* "Feelings" take over; Robin Williams, sharp up to that point, turns cuddly, and the air goes out of the movie. What I will always remember is an edge of temper. *Good Will Hunting* persuades us that genius is of incalculable worth but utter hell to live with.

Photograph by George Kraychyk/Miramax.

MATT DAMON SHOWS UP AGAIN AS RUDY Baylor, the young, just-out-of-law-school hero of **The Rainmaker.** Rudy is an earnest southern boy, gallant by instinct, with a streak of natural piety. Yet Rudy is also a lawyer, and therefore it's his business to consort with crooks and sellouts, and in general to work within a corrupt system that favors the wealthy and the powerful. *The Rainmaker,* adapted and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, is the most heartfelt of the six John Grisham movies—the one that bores most deeply and intimately into lawyering as a calling, a condition of spirit as well as a career. Is it worthwhile being a lawyer at all? Are the compromises too great? Michael Herr's written narration, spoken by Damon, is surprisingly touching, and the actor gives the straightest of straight performances. His lawyer is not some slick mover who eventually finds his conscience, like Tom Cruise in *The Firm;* he's idealistic from the beginning, and also devoid of self-righteousness (in fact, he has a wily streak that grows more and more pronounced as the movie goes on). It's possible to root for this young knight without feeling like a fool.

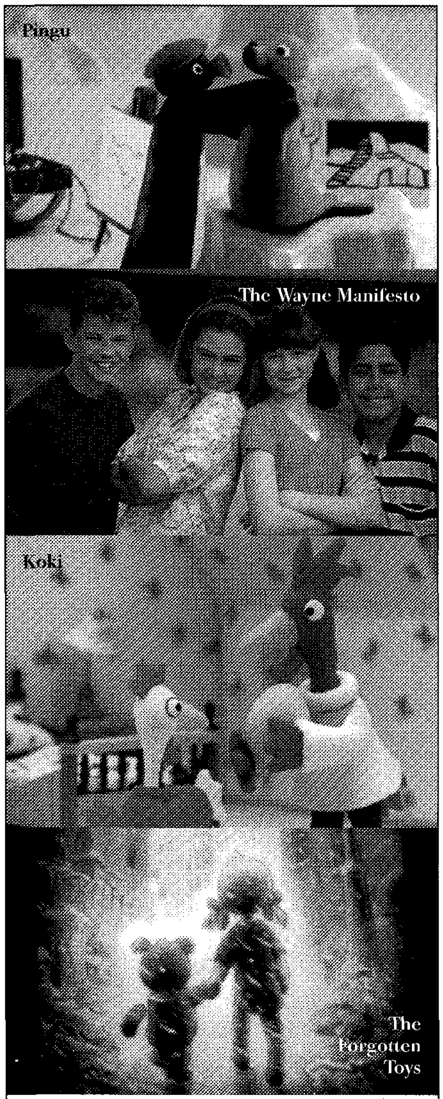
The Rainmaker is essentially a David-and-Goliath tale. In Memphis, Rudy and his scapegrace helper, Deck (Danny DeVito)—a true lover of the law who never passed the bar—take on a huge insurance company, a crooked outfit that won't pay the claims made by a family with a boy dying of leukemia. A big, nasty insurance company! It's not exactly a moving target, and unfortunately the picture falls into caricature now and then. The company's CEO is a desiccated moron (Roy Scheider), its chief lawyer (Jon Voight) a beautifully coiffed, contemptuous swine who gives himself away at every turn.

Coppola needs a success, and he plays up these populist elements, yet there's something else in his direction, something of the old textured quality. The atmosphere of low-rent lawyering is lovingly dowdy, and Coppola displays his familiar appreciation for the energy of morally compromised people. Rudy's first employer is a cuff-linked gangster-shyster played by a bearded Mickey Rourke with his early modesty and precision—Rourke, hoarse, in the gaudiest of gaudy shirts, makes a gorgeous slimeball. Even DeVito is restrained as the true believer who may not enter the church. Despite its moral simplicities, the movie is highly watchable. It's richly cast from top to bottom (Mary Kay Place, Teresa Wright, and Virginia Madsen show up in small roles), and Damon holds it together. We can even believe that this young Galahad takes care of a battered young housewife (Claire Danes) without having any initial sexual interest in her. Purity is one of the hardest things to bring off with conviction. Damon brings it off.

MIKE FIGGIS'S GREAT 1995 MOVIE *LEAVING Las Vegas,* starring Nicolas Cage and Elisabeth Shue, chronicled the wrenching final days of a lowlife Tristan and Isolde. His new romantic drama, **One Night Stand,** is smoother, sleeker, and, though hardly without skill, not nearly as interesting. The picture reminded me of something intelligent but essentially novelettish and chic from Europe 30 years ago—something like Claude Sautet's *Les Choses de la Vie,* in which the French bourgeoisie smoked too much, played at adultery, and smashed up their cars. A successful Los Angeles advertising director, Max (Wesley Snipes), visits an old friend in New York who has AIDS (Robert Downey Jr.), misses his plane home, and spends a night with a lovely woman he meets in the city (Nastassja Kinski). Max goes back to Los Angeles, but now he's dissatisfied with his high-powered job and his snappish, sexually demanding wife (Ming-Na Wen), who orders him around and bores and exhausts him in bed. Poor Max! When he returns to New York a year later to see his friend, now dying, he runs into his one-night stand, and the flame, as they say, is relit.

The situations are so obvious that the audience giggles, but *One Night Stand,* like everything else Figgis has done (including *Stormy Monday* and *Internal Affairs*), has style and more than a little flavor. Figgis, a musician as well as a writer-director, likes to work off-center, concentrating more on the embellishments and variations than on the main tune. The episodes illustrating Max, a commercial director, at work are very glitzy and MTV-ish indeed, but the scenes of friendship, sex, and marital discord play in expressive fits and starts, with inadvertent moments, stolen glances, repressed laughs, and unfinished thoughts dominating the meager spoken dialogue. Figgis gets a lot out of Wesley Snipes, who has been known to bluster his way through movies. This time, Snipes conveys a real sense of privacy—his face is always alive, and we can see a man registering both dissatisfactions and pleasures that he's not eager to share. Nastassja Kinski smiles and has very little to say, but she's charming, and Robert Downey Jr. gives an intense and bitter performance as the dying young man. At his insistence, his friends give a big party on the day of his funeral, and everyone gets laid. Figgis has a show-business sense of things encompassing an idiosyncratic moral view. The meaning of the movie seems to be that adultery is a celebration of life. Well, maybe. ■

An archive of David Denby's 1997 reviews is available at newyorkmag.com, along with continually updated movie news, an upcoming-release schedule, and more.



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BOOKS THOMAS BELLER

Other Voices

George Plimpton’s new oral biography is a great cocktail party. But the guest of honor, Truman Capote, had a little too much to drink.

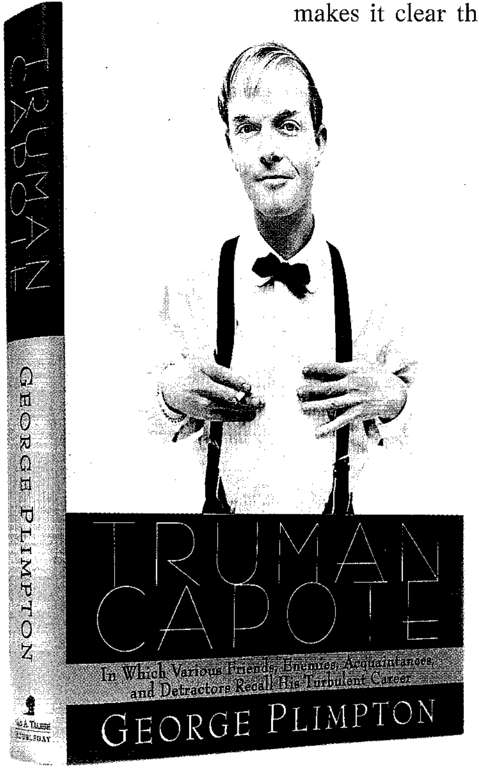
Truman Capote

BY GEORGE PLIMPTON

Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; 498 pages; $35

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT PARTIES, AND IT’S FULL OF air kisses, bruised egos, and snazzy outfits. If fabulousness were humidity, then reading even a few pages of this biography would make you damp.

It is also a book about writing, or rather about a writer, but these two worlds—the private inner world of a writer and the public outer world of socializing—developed so concurrently in Truman Capote’s life it is almost as though they had a fundamental relationship.


TRUMAN CAPOTE
GEORGE PLIMPTON
TRUMAN CAPOTE
In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career
GEORGE PLIMPTON
NAN A. TALESE DOUBLEDAY

Truman Capote hosted his first party when he was 7 years old. I don’t want to condescend to second-graders (though shy, I recall being very adamant about something I referred to as “children’s rights” when in second grade), but for a 7-year-old, Truman Capote showed an amazing aptitude for the form.

“He said he wanted to throw a party so grand that everybody would remember him,” reports his cousin. And in Monroeville, as he was later to do in New York, Capote lived up to his word. It was a Halloween party—everyone had to wear a costume—and it was scheduled for a Friday evening, an unconventional starting time for a second-grade party in today’s New York, and likely an unconventional time in Monroeville in 1931. The occasion, really, was that he would shortly be leaving Monroeville for New York, to live with his mother and her new husband (who adopted him and gave him the name Capote), so in addition to being the host, he was the guest of honor. And then there was a scandal. And then, as if the scandal itself were not enough, he put a *spin* on the scandal.

The scandal involved the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, which had heard that black children would be attending the party. The Klan decided this was intolerable. They came marching down in their hoods and robes but were rebuffed by the father of Truman’s friend and next-door neighbor, Harper Lee (who later wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*). The Klan shuffled off, the party resumed, and the next day Truman assembled his friends in their tree house with a notebook in hand and said, “How does it feel to see history in front of your eyes? We saw the Ku Klux Klan commit suicide. Didn’t you see the people’s faces? The Klan will never have any more support in this county. . . . They died last night.”

I repeat this in such detail because over the course of this long book there are moments when it seems as if Truman Capote’s life might be fun to emulate in some way—the energy, the levity and bravado, the facility for self-invention (by which I mean the ability to lie with such gusto that being caught makes you not culpable, just creative). But hearing about this 7-year-old host makes it clear that you don’t just assume such an identity; you are born with it.

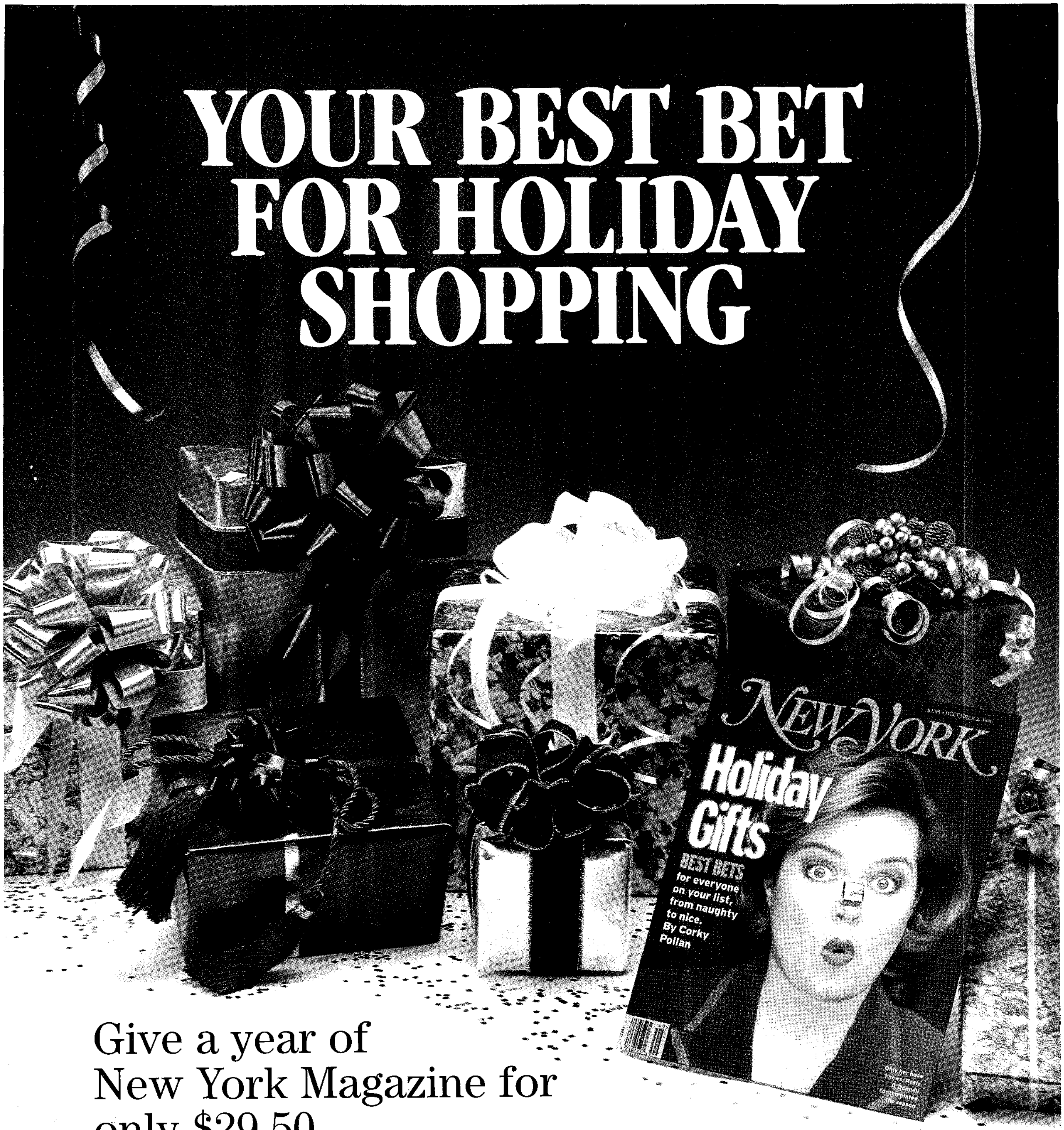
Capote’s talent for parties sits beside his talent for writing, sometimes seeming to overshadow it. The stories about his accomplishments as a writer are fascinating, particularly the details surrounding *In Cold Blood,* which, by sheer proximity to the subject matter, possess some of the same dark suspense as the book; but the lingua franca of this book is gossip. So the juiciest tidbit insinuates that Capote was lovers with Perry Smith, one of the murderers (“They spent a lot of time up there in the cell, he spent a considerable amount of money bribing the guard to go around the corner,” reports a member of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation).

Capote’s next big project after *In Cold Blood* was his Black and White Ball, which he threw on November 28, 1966, at the Plaza Hotel. The first chapter on the ball begins with a handwritten note, a draft of the party invitation, but its resemblance to a manuscript page is telling—for all the energy Capote spent planning the party, worrying about it, and fantasizing about its imminent success, it may as well have been a book he was working on. He clearly saw creating a scene as a legitimate work of art, and approached it as such.

Reading about his vast preparations for this ball was like watching someone cavorting on a riverboat, drinking mint juleps in a seersucker suit and living it up while the boat heads straight for Niagara Falls. You wave frantically at him in warning, and he waves back: “Hi!”

Truman Capote stayed young too long and became old too soon.

Photograph by Steve Wisbauer.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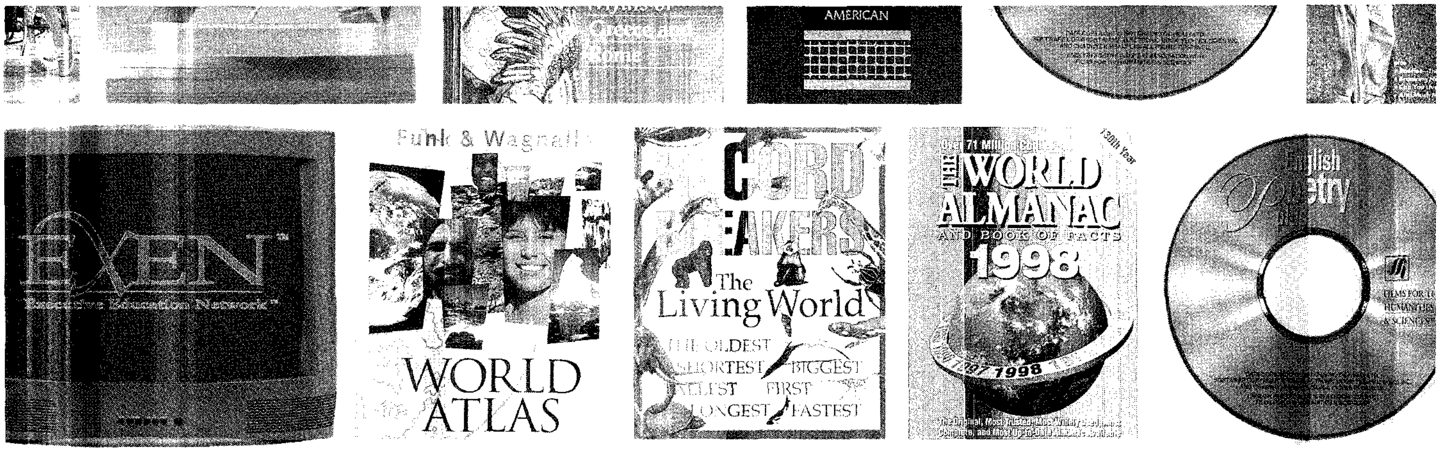
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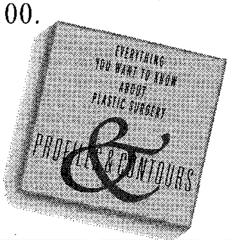

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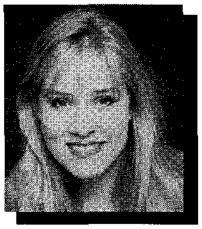

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Don't do it! I wanted to shout. *You cannot be a writer and at the same time seek to place yourself at the center of society. Parties and drinking are bad for writing; hosting is too creative—and therefore too draining—an activity for a serious writer to indulge in. . . .* I went on and on in this vein until I entered a kind of trance, put the book down, reached for the phone, and proceeded to invite about 30 people for an impromptu cocktail party the following evening.

The book's conviviality and fabulousness are infectious. So, perhaps, is the self-destructiveness that it charts.

The very form of an oral biography mimics a party—all those varied voices, some earnest, some catty and gossipy, taking you aside one by one and giving you their version of events. It's very readable; as when watching music videos, you keep wanting to know what comes next.

George Plimpton is not so much the book's author as its host. Although his introduction suggests a good deal of the actual interviewing was delegated, Plimpton hovers over the proceedings, and the whole book is suffused in a Plimptonesque ambience—bemused, arch, and a little tipsy.

Plimpton's and Capote's worlds overlapped significantly, though the two men arrived from different points: Capote started so far on the outside of society that he spent an enormous amount of effort getting in, and Plimpton was born so far on the inside that he has spent an enormous amount of effort getting out into the realm of artists and literature (or at least getting to the periphery of "in").

Capote bypassed middle age; having stayed very young too long, he became very old too soon, and the Black and White Ball seems to have been his turning point. It was a smashing success, and just as the success of *In Cold Blood* changed him as a writer, the success of his ball changed him as a persona; his desire to entertain manifested itself in verbal flourishes, not written ones. And he spent all his time with his "swans," as he called them, the wives of rich and powerful men. Lunch became the high point of his creative life.

It's morbidly fascinating to read of his ascent into the world of yacht-hopping and his subsequent ejection from this world after he published chapters from his roman à clef *Answered Prayers* in *Esquire*. It was Capote's often-announced intention that *Answered Prayers* would resemble Proust, but its sensibility now seems to share less with Proust than with Liberace.

I found Plimpton's last oral biography, *Edie*, more exciting and moving than this one. Perhaps this is because Edie Sedgwick was a blank screen upon which other people could project themselves. Truman Capote insisted on being both projectionist and screen. ■

THEATER **JOHN SIMON**

David as Goliath

Trapped in 'The Old Neighborhood,' Mamet's characters have mostly lost the power of speech, although they do well with obscenities.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT DAVID MAMET WROTE SOME of **The Old Neighborhood** fifteen years ago. At that time he still had some talent. Rather less than he had 25 years ago, but more than he has exhibited since, as witness the current piece, which is worse than bad, scandalous. Of course, the critical confraternity salivates on demand; after all, it is reviewers who made Mamet into Mammon, and admitting one's errors is awkward. And the brainwashed audiences duly laugh at what isn't funny, gasp at what is baloney, and applaud what may yet prove profound. As for Mamet, once you've been crowned emperor, you don't need new clothes: Any old rag, or none, will do.

Both Mamet and the man he has unacknowledgedly aped, Harold Pinter, are phonies. They imitate speech at its lowest and fuzziest, set up behavior that makes little psychological sense, create plots from which key parts are missing, and affect an air of mystery as if some deep-seated truths were being grappled with, whereas there is only semi-articulate verbiage covering a philosophical void. Both writers use indiscriminate pauses as if they were inroads on the ineffable, and Mamet now also scatters italics, block capitals, quotation marks, as if they could spice up insipidity into succulence. He also relies heavily on obscenity, which, as well as an earnest of authenticity, is clearly music to his ears.

Sentences tend to be poor, nasty, brutish, and often unfinished; latterly, Mamet has also added unfinished words. And always endless repetition. In the first of the present, vaguely connected three playlets, *The Disappearance of the Jews,* Joey explains the anti-Semitism of his friend Bobby's *shiksa* wife: "Fuck that shit, fuck that shit, she's got a point in my ass, what the fuck did they ever do? They can't make a joke for chrissake, I'll tell you something, you are sitting down, the reason that the goyim hate us the whole time, in addition they were envious is; we don't descend to their level [pause] because we wouldn't fight. The reason we were persecuted because we said, hey, alright, leave me alone, those nordic types, alright, these football players, these cocksuckers in a fuckin', wrapped in hides come down and 'cause we don't fight back they go 'Who are those people . . . ?' "

This sort of stuff goes on for 90 minutes, feeling both endless and not yet begun. Bad grammar, terrible syntax, clichés, non sequiturs, idiocies—but, man, that's how people talk! That's the nitty-gritty, rock-bottom, in-your-face, like-it-or-lump-it, fucking truth, right? Wrong. It is a travesty that finally bypasses reality through excessive distortion, repetition, exaggeration, and vacuity. Instead of reproducing faces with their characteristic twitch, Mamet has given us, more and more, the twitch without the face.

In *The Disappearance of the Jews,* Bobby (Mamet's alter ego) revisits his native Chicago and, in his hotel room, reminisces with his old friend Joey about their shared youth. They touch on any number of absorbing items such as which of two dumb dyke Jewish whores, both named Debbie, which of them slept with; whether Howie Greenberg went to Temple Zion or "turned out to be a fag"; and in which Marshall Fields Deeny, Bobby's former girlfriend, now sells cosmetics. Both regret their lapsed Judaism, and Joey fantasizes at length about how great it would be to be a laborer in the shtetl.

The piece drones along, resolving itself into a stream of complaints, their motto "Oh, Bobby, it's all gone. It's all gone." There's bitching about wives one would like to kill, about the loss of Jewish ritual, about growing old, about having to give up smoking, about not having been in Hollywood in the twenties when Jews ran it, about living in America, about the old shoe store being gone: Mamet is the Quintilian of kvetch.

In the second play, *Jolly,* our Chicago-visiting hero is staying with his sister, Jolly, and her doormat husband, Carl. Jolly (modeled on Mamet's sister) is a screwed-up hysteric griping about everything, even about the stranger who politely reprimanded her for driving in the wrong direction on a one-way street. Jolly and Bob

Talk is cheap: Patti LuPone and Peter Riegert suffer through Mamet's unattractive, and unenlightening, playlets.

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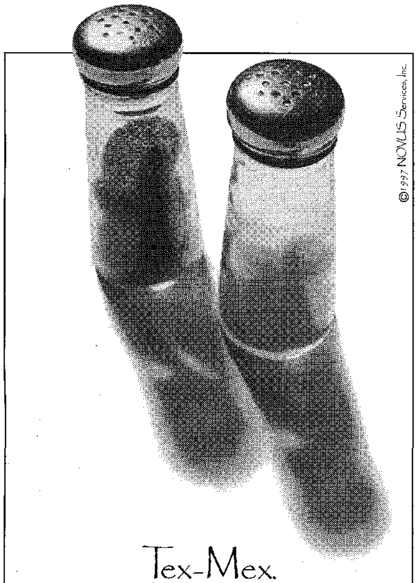

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kvetch mostly about their parents in a long litany of recrimination. With the Stakhanovite memory of paranoiacs, they rehearse their parents' heinous crimes, such as buying them the wrong presents, blaming all their present woes on parental lapses. Other relatives also get it, but the hatred of parents is boundless, especially for Mother: "Hey. You know what? Hey, you know what I'm going to *tell* you something: 'fuck her, though she's dead.' [pause] Fuck *her* and fuck the *lot* of 'em." And because their parents screwed up the siblings, they will screw up *their* children. Rancor and self-pity wallow in the same trough.

In the third playlet, *Deeny*, our hero, revisits a former girlfriend. This is the shortest and most pointless of the three: Deeny and Bob just blither away about anything: the gardening Deeny would like to do but never will; also coffee, cigarettes, faith, the world, and whether tribes that mutilate themselves get pleasure from it as "you undergo the pain of, the pain of, the pain of giving birth to yourself." And at great, incoherent (and even misspelled) length, they mourn the death of passion most passionlessly. There is no excuse for this silliness except to give Rebecca Pidgeon (Mrs. Mamet) a chance to act the sort of ditsy part that suits her best.

THEATER

The actors, who also include Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, and Jack Willis, manage, bless their hearts, to memorize and spout without cracking up Mamet's echolalic sputterings and inchoate tongue twisters. But then, actors are amazing creatures who will do anything a director tells them: take their clothes off, simulate copulation, enact defecation, inhale deadly cigarettes, play Mamet. Jobs, I guess, are scarce, and one must suffer for one's art, and as long as critics rave and audiences cheer, why the hell not?

TONY WALTON, THE DISTINGUISHED SET AND costume designer, is delving ever deeper into directing. From Coward and Wilde, the comedic route has led naturally to Shaw, but **Major Barbara** was not a happy choice. As Walton reminds us in his directorial note, the play did not come easily to GBS, who, from its 1905 inception to the 1941 movie version, did not leave off tinkering with it.

There are problems galore. Characters like the munitions manufacturer Basil Zakharoff, the model for Andrew Undershaft, no longer exist, and ring false to modern ears. The Salvation Army, after Brecht and Burrows & Loesser, seems an unsalvageable subject. And after that superbly acted all-star film (Wendy Hiller, Rex Harrison, Robert Morley, Robert Newton, Emlyn Williams, Sybil Thorndike, Deborah Kerr, and several others—in the unlikely case you have forgotten), how can one not perceive a new cast as gate-crashers?

And then the worthy Irish Repertory Theatre's unpromising premises. How to squeeze several set changes, two of them requiring much space, onto a small, only modestly equipped, stage? Walton has done what man could where superman was called for. Furthermore, he could dispose over a cast of only decent ability, with many doublings, where nothing short of near-indecent bravura would do. The rising star Melissa Errico laudably tries for a subtle Barbara, but the burning intensity is lacking: This Salvation Army major would not set such impossibly idealistic standards for herself and others. Boyd Gaines is a likable young actor, but I can't see him as a professor of Greek, let alone one who trades in his mortarboard for manufacturing mortars.

Jack Ryland is a more than acceptable Undershaft, save for missing the Machiavellian—or is it Shavian?—demonic twinkle. The burden of Shaw's not quite persuasive paradoxes (love and war were the master's twin Achilles' heels) rests heavily on his shoulders, and though they do not buckle, neither do they strut. Among the others, only Charlotte Moore, in the first of her two parts, is worthy of note. Still, this is not an unworthy try. What may be Shaw's supreme virtue does shine forth: the manufacture of words as weapons in the unceasing war of ideas in which all of us, warmongers and pacifists alike, are inescapably immersed.

In brief: MANY YEARS AGO, THE ACTRESS CANdy Clark asked me to define *pretentious* for her. Would that Jane Anderson's **Defying Gravity** had been around to simply send her to. A play about the *Challenger* disaster has no business being cute, as, for instance, in introducing Claude Monet as a pseudo-philosophizing character who joins that doomed mission into outer space. But everything here is replete with cut-rate preciosity, cramp-inducing lines my hand refused to jot down. Candy Buckley does honorably by the character coyly named Teacher, and Lois Smith even better by the one named Betty, although Menopausal Busybody would fit rather better.

That play, like the musical revue **Street Corner Symphony,** is performed without intermission, which all too often means captive audience, for good—i.e., bad—reasons. This thing, which I suspect landed on Broadway only because what showbiz knows as the chitlin circuit savvily rejected it, was conceived, choreographed, and staged by one Marion J. Caffey. Mr. C., whose very bio reeks of inflated nonentity, should, before giving "personal thanks" to God Almighty, learn how to spell it. I created my own intermission as I escaped just short of midway, just short of brain damage. Recommended to anyone with mortal enemies to send gift tickets to. ■

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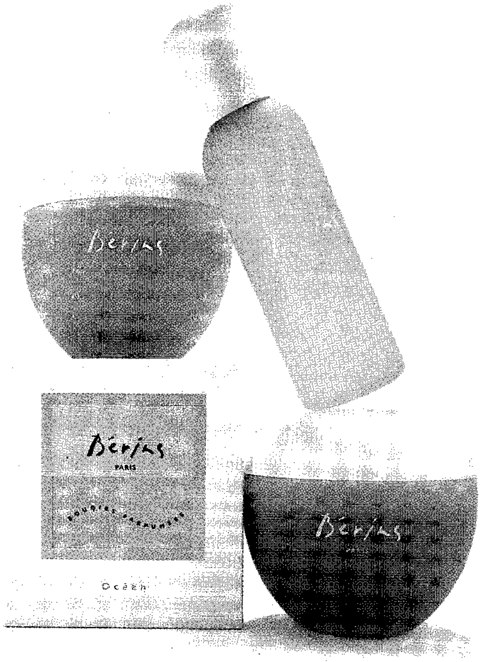

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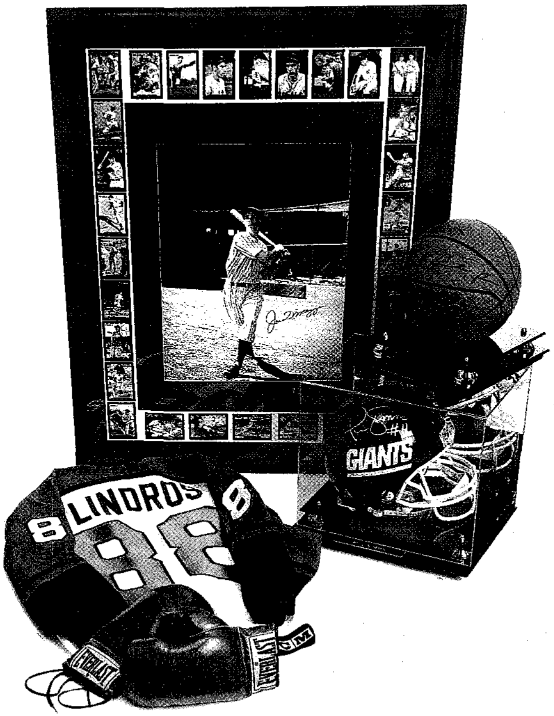

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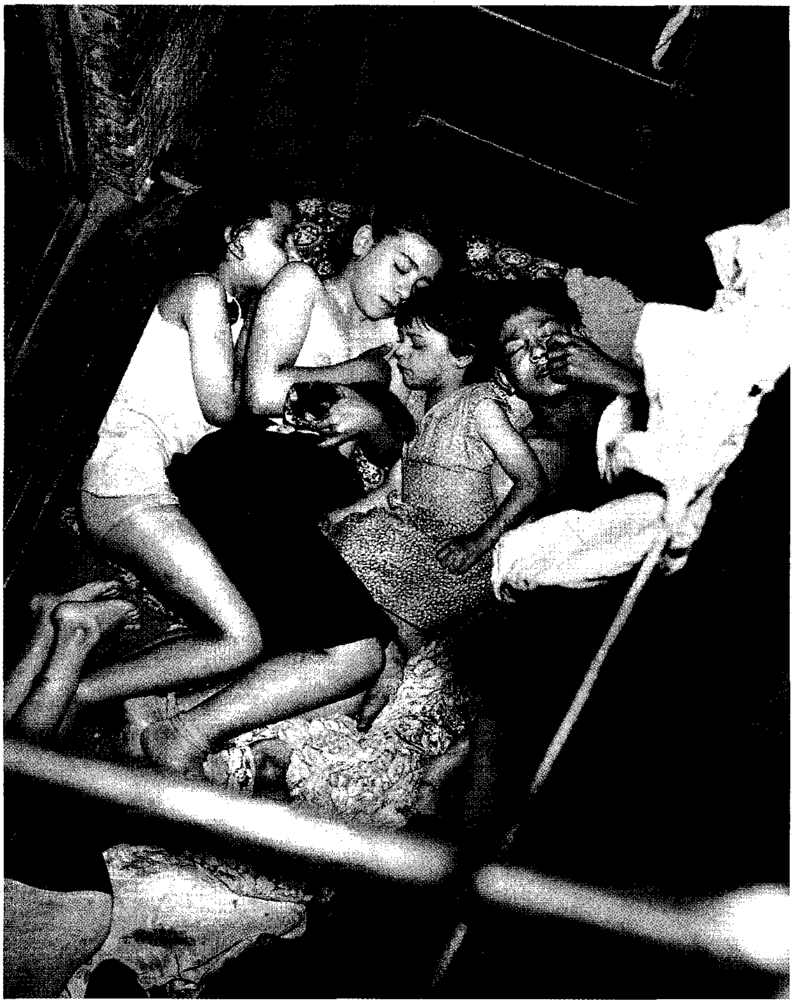

The naked city: Weegee's *Heat Spell* (1941).

TABLOID JOURNALISM HAS NEVER BEEN ABOUT "the facts." It is instead a vehicle for popular fantasy—a vulgar democratic art—that uses the news of the day to arouse dreams of desire, envy, cruelty, joy, and despair. The chin-pullers in the serious press are invariably troubled by its behavior, considering it irresponsible. They should relax: It's a timid beast at heart. Tabloid journalism disappoints not because it goes too far but because it does not go far enough. In the end, the tabloids (on TV as well as in print) almost always prove too conservative to lie or distort with the force of art, too conventional to goose, really goose, the news into truths beyond the ken of the New York *Times*. But there are important exceptions, the greatest of them being the incomparable Weegee.

In the thirties and forties, the photographer Weegee, whose real name was Arthur Fellig (1899–1968), put unprecedented pressure upon the formulaic subjects of the New York tabloids: the fires and the murders and the bloody accident scenes; the sunbathers packed onto the Coney Island beach and the kids playing around an open fire hydrant; the swells at the opera and the deadbeats on the Bowery; the circus coming to town with THE HUMAN CANNONBALL. Not surprisingly, **Weegee's World,** the wonderful show of more than 300 photographs now at the International Center of Photography Midtown, emphasizes Weegee's relation to the tabloid city. (The show is organized by Miles Barth and has a catalogue that includes essays by Barth, Alain Bergala, and Ellen Handy.) What this accent on the melodramatic surface should not obscure, however, is Weegee's significance as an artist. Not only did he transform tabloid photography into a powerful street expressionism, but he also reached deep into the soul of his century.

Consider the name Weegee, which sounds like it belongs to a magician or a circus clown. Self-invented, self-made, and self-promoting, a ham who tirelessly pushed his act on the public, Fellig loved to present himself chomping a cigar and armored in the paraphernalia of his trade. But this act did not seem just corny or colorful, like something out of Damon Runyon. It seemed necessary. Fellig's "Weegee" was a quintessential modern figure. A city creature. A night watchman who did not sleep, racing about the darkened streets with his flash. A man with a gleeful instinct for disaster and spectacle, nervous, narcissistic, goggle-eyed. Or, to put it differently, "Weegee" was an invention steeped in the existential desperation of the time. Not consciously, perhaps: Fellig was also a natural whose art, despite its artifice and manipulation, always appears heartbreakingly innocent. But Fellig was manifestly a poor kid who had suffered firsthand the painful anonymity of the big city. He understood the need to wear a mask, however grotesque. And he knew what it looks like when the mask slips under the pressure of calamity. No picture in the history of photography is more naked in feeling than *I Cried When I Took This Picture (Mrs. Henrietta Torres and Her Daughter Ada Watch As Another Daughter and Her Son Die in Fire).*

In Weegee, the modern spectacle is not entertainment. Whether he is photographing a dwarf at Sammy's on the Bowery or the socialites at the opera, he pushes the moment toward some precipitous edge; his people dance on the lip of the grave. Yet he is never weepy or sanctimonious. He is joyful. Every Weegee picture says "Gotcha!," as if he had just nabbed (like a cop collaring a thief) the elusive truth before it could escape. In the sulfurous light of the old flashbulbs, he found a great formal means to convey both the artifice and the revelations of the urban stage. At night, he

Photograph by Weegee, courtesy of International Center of Photography, New York, bequest of Wilma Wilcox.

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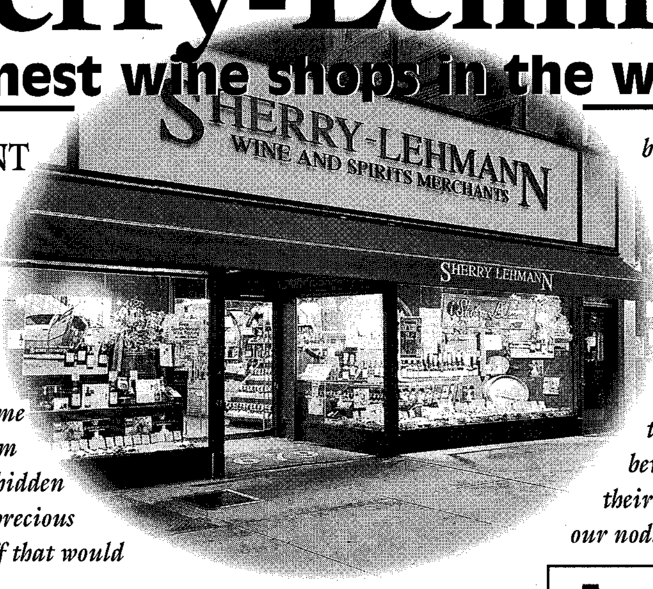

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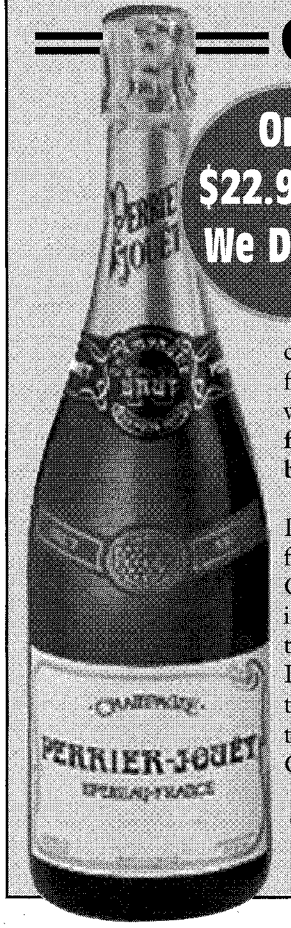

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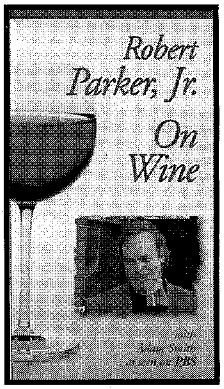

Robert Parker comments on "Parker's Video on Wine": Several months ago I was profiled on the PBS show *Adam Smith*. The producers received such positive feedback that they have added some of the show's out-takes and produced a video...This forty-five minute interview, conducted in my office, covers tasting basics, as well as my philosophy of wine evaluation, tasting, and winemaking. There is plenty of good, fundamental wine information in the video...Readers will get a close look at me sniffing, sipping and spitting, my tasting office, and a glimpse of a faithful bodyguard, King George, my English Bulldog...This is a rare video interview **containing considerable information on wine**. Moreover, it was produced in an extremely professional manner by *Adam Smith.*"

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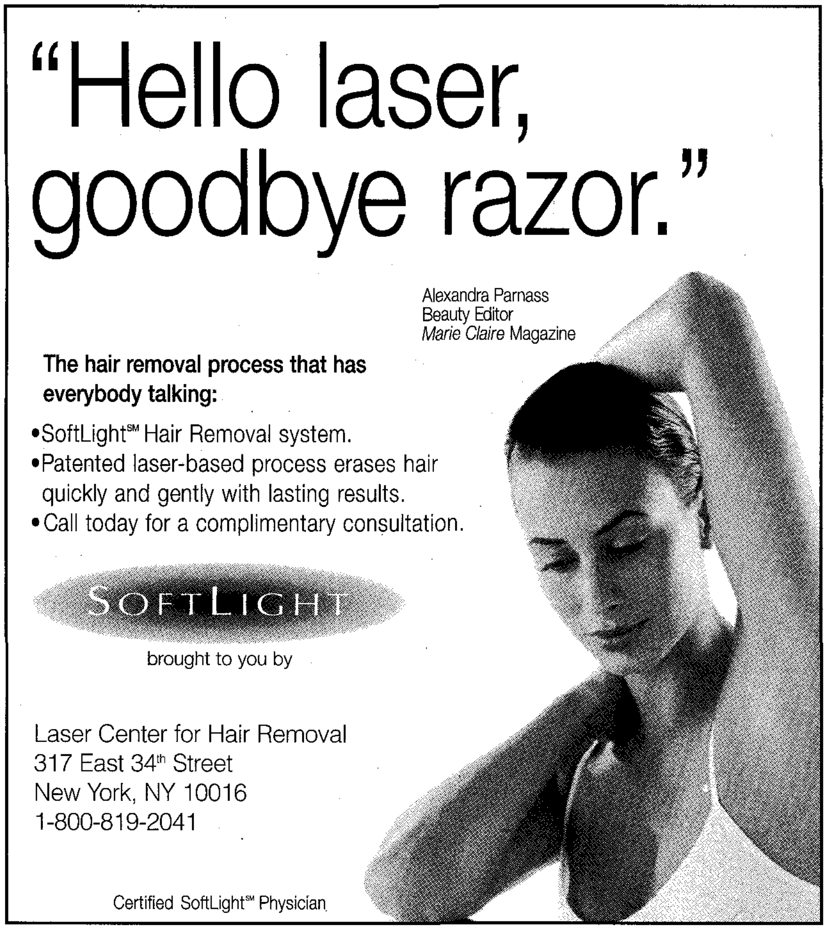
used his flash to create a magnificent chiaroscuro, spotlighting the central event in a narrow circle of fired-up light—as the wolfish shadows creep in from the alleys of the city.

Weegee also gives definitive form to the modern crowd. He sees the audience, not just the movie. Often, the bystanders become an intimate part of a disaster: *Their First Murder,* a picture in which there is no corpse, presents a kaleidoscopic flux of feeling ranging from hot curiosity to misery. Death strikes randomly—intimately—plucking victims from what Weegee called "the naked city." In short, he loves the crowd as much as the crime. (The crowd is a crime waiting to happen.) Yet he does not distinguish himself from his subjects; he refuses the privileges of the knowing artist or the ideologue. What a man of the people! What a recorder of class suffering! And not just in the famous photograph called *The Critic,* that Dickensian image of a crone leaping out at a powdered socialite. In *The Opera Opened Last Night,* four men in top hats, seen from the back, create a bland social wall that cannot be breached.

Like most serious caricaturists, Weegee could be unexpectedly tender. One of his finest photographs is *Heat Spell.* Here, he took another tabloid convention—the poor sleeping on tenement fire escapes—and transformed it into a subtle, truly tragic vision of what society (or perhaps life itself) does to children. The subject is innocence: sleeping children. Among the children is a girl on the cusp of adolescence, the nipple of one breast exposed to the light as she cuddles her kitten. Sentimental? Not at all. This litter of children is dirty; their bodies, stiffened with sleep, recall the splayed limbs of a corpse. The composition is brilliant. Weegee shoots at an angle, which twists the fire escape around until it seems unstable—about to tip the children into space. What, one cannot help but ask, does the future hold for that budding girl?

It's too bad that in our tabloid times, we don't have a Weegee. Imagine how he would have covered the Diana story—with a caustic but truth-telling eye. He did not, bless him, believe in the princesses of the press. Before her death, he would have instead been drawn to the stagy artifice, the freakish system of publicity, that enveloped Diana. He would have understood her as both perpetrator and victim. And after the car crash, he would not have lied and whispered as the cowardly press did. He would have confronted the grotesque comedy of the whole affair. He would have relished the revolting mounds of flowers, the bathetic displays of mass grief, the hypocritical posturing on every side. And somehow not have been cruel or merely satirical. Another human-interest story. ■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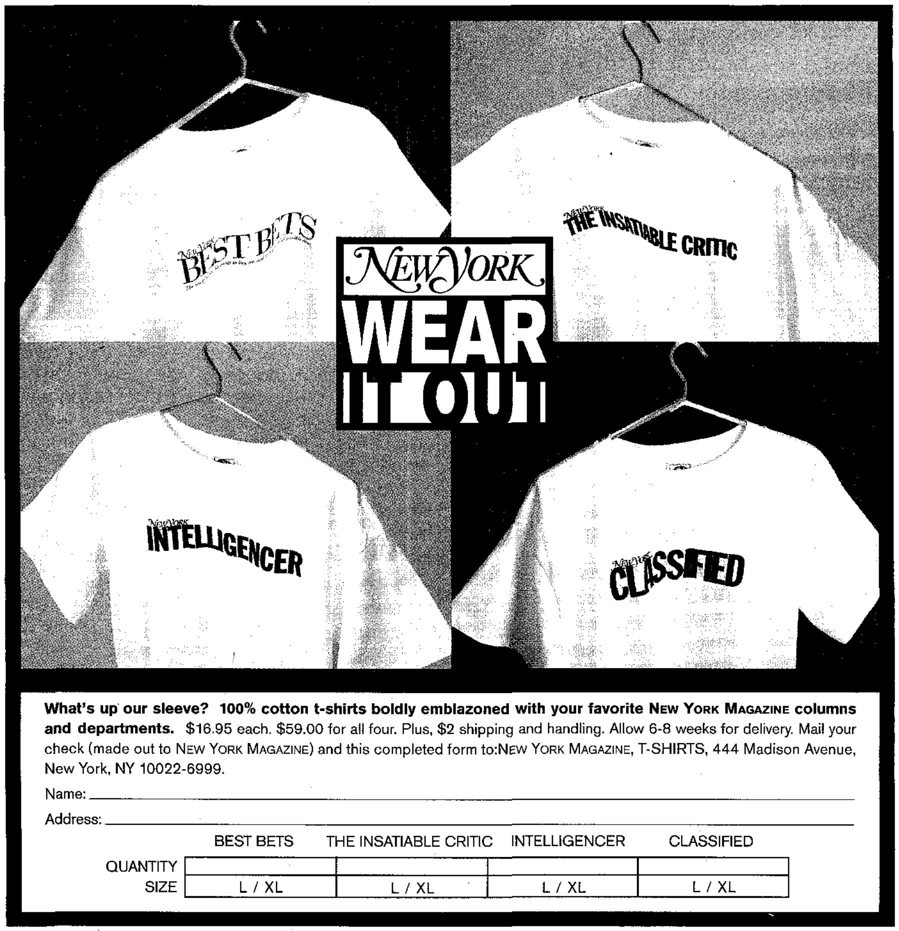

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

PETER G. DAVIS

Half-Raked

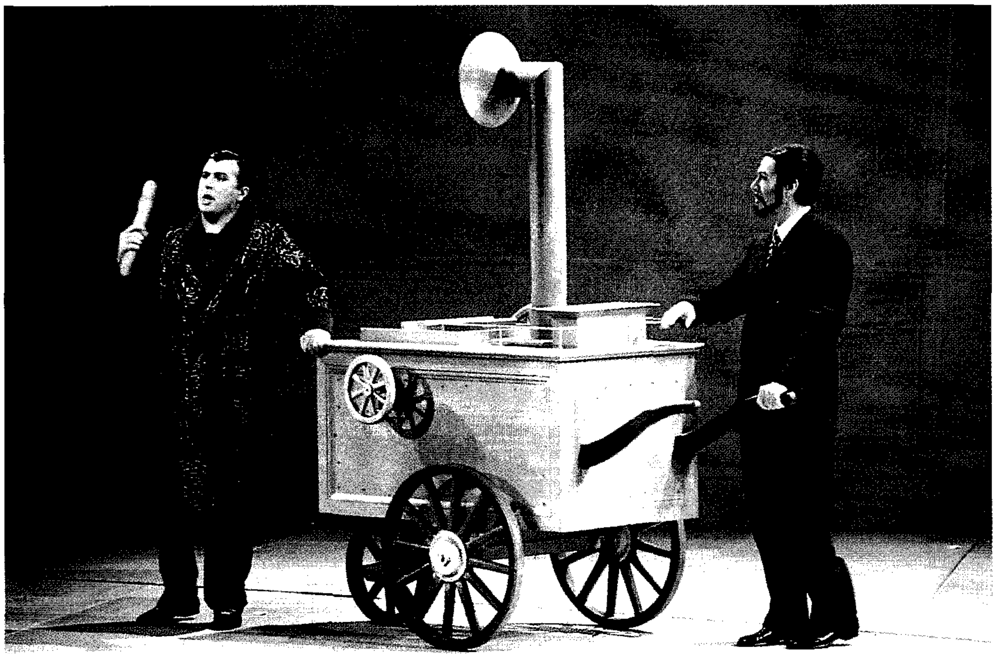
'The Rake's Progress' isn't easy to love, and the Met's production doesn't help; a new diva from Eve Queler's Opera Orchestra.

MUCH HAS HAPPENED TO STRAVINSKY'S **The Rake's Progress** since its American premiere at the Metropolitan Opera, where the work played to half-empty houses in 1953. Neither the Met's general manager at the time, Rudolf Bing, nor New York audiences thought much of the opera back then, but it still eventually circled the world to become a repertory piece, one of the few new operas of the past 50 years to do so. *The Rake* is back at the Met in a new production, but I wonder if it will fare any better. Some are still allergic to an opera that so aggressively strikes such self-conscious poses, from the pastoral archaisms of the W. H. Auden–Chester Kallman libretto to the score itself, the apotheosis of Stravinsky's late-neoclassical style. Others have gotten past that, along with some truly pesky dramaturgical problems that the three creators never entirely solved, and embraced the work for what it is: a disturbing morality play clothed in a richly inventive, gloriously expressive score. Stravinsky may have nursed a lifelong mistrust of opera's inherent emotional power, but here for the first and last time he allowed himself to be seduced, even if he submitted on his own terms.

I fervently hope that newcomers to *The Rake's Progress* will not ascribe the flaws of the Met's current presentation to the opera itself. The sets (Peter Davison) and costumes (Judy Levin) make little attempt to replicate the eighteenth-century Hogarth paintings that inspired the plot, the descent of the wastrel Tom Rakewell from wanton pleasure on the streets of London to madness and death in Bedlam. Instead, one-dimensional backdrops of no special period flavor or painterly distinction suggest an early-twentieth-century milieu of nowhere in particular, with Tom in tweed slacks and a sleeveless argyle, and his put-upon girlfriend, Anne Trulove, looking suspiciously like a suburban Princess Di ready for tennis, in a plaid wool skirt, cardigan sweater, and sensible shoes. Mostly the overall operetta-ish look of the show suggests that we're in for an innovative production of *No, No, Nanette*.

Nothing wrong with that—the work has been relocated to stranger places without undercutting the opera's expressive message (Peter Sellars recently set the action in a Southern California prison; Sarah Caldwell updated it to the mod-mad sixties). What really hurts, though, is Jonathan Miller's inert direction. Miller always talks plausibly and intelligently to the press about ideas for his upcoming productions, but the results invariably disappoint. What he mainly does here is shuffle the characters idly about the stage, and in ways that communicate very little about their personalities or relationships. He also ruins some of the best Auden-Kallman theatrical coups by ignoring them altogether. Since she is already unveiled at her first entrance, Baba the Turk never does stun the crowd, or the audience, by displaying her full beard and triumphantly bringing down the curtain. Like everything that I've seen lately by Miller, who seems to direct a new opera production weekly somewhere in the world, his vision of Stravinsky's *Rake* looks lazy, half-thought-through, and hastily thrown together.

The principals are all seasoned *Rake* veterans, but this latest outing seems to have defeated them. Jerry Hadley no longer bothers to sing the title role but mostly declaims the music at pitch—not one phrase is offered with the slightest concern for its lyrical content or musical shape, a catastrophe in a part so crammed with ravishing melody. As usual, Samuel Ramey is devilishly suave in sight and sound as Nick Shadow, so much so that his chronic inability to make anything specific of his roles is all the more regrettable. At least Dawn Upshaw's Anne continues to be appealingly ur-



Jerry Hadley, left, as Tom Rakewell; Samuel Ramey, right, as Nick Shadow.

Photograph by Winnie Klotz, courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera.

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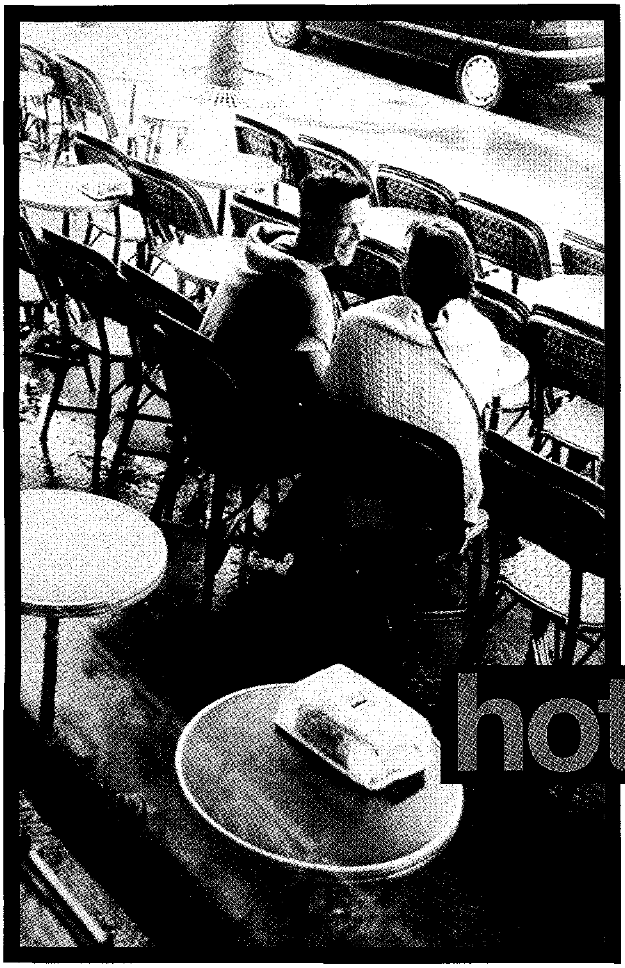
Illustration by Steven Salerno

gent and caring, even if her soprano sounded uncharacteristically parched and monochromatic at the first performance. Although the staging robs Denyce Graves of many opportunities to score theatrical points as Baba, she manages to be a strong presence, mainly by looking fabulous and wringing every ounce of humor from the music.

My most potent memories of the Met's first *Rake's Progress* those many years ago was how exquisitely the Met orchestra played the score under Fritz Reiner, still this opera's most effective interpreter in my experience, and I include the composer. Today's famous Met pit band does not erase those fond memories of its predecessors, and in any case James Levine's approach is far too soft-centered, rhythmically lax, and drawn-out for such quicksilver music. The best hope for the Met's current *Rake* production is a restaged and recast revival at some future date, and one placed in the hands of a conductor in closer touch with the musical idiom.

NEW YORK OPERAGOERS TRADITIONALLY look to Eve Queler's **Opera Orchestra of New York** for two boons: rare works unlikely to be staged by the Met or City Opera, and first glimpses of Europe's latest singing sensations. OONY's first opera-in-concert performance of the season in Carnegie Hall satisfied both cravings by presenting Rossini's *Tancredi,* the 20-year-old composer's first smash hit in 1813, and, in the title role, the debut of Vesselina Kasarova, a mezzo-soprano from Bulgaria whose recordings for RCA/BMG (including *Tancredi*) have stirred up much interest.

Major mezzos are thick on the ground right now, particularly those specializing in florid bel canto opera. Even in that crowded field, though, Kasarova is a clear standout, and her rapturous reception indicates the arrival of a new fave to worship. Strong and vibrant at both ends of the scale, this richly sensuous voice exercises instant appeal—only nitpickers will probably point out that the registers are far from smoothly blended, a warning sign that might spell trouble in the future. At the moment, Kasarova exudes total security and self-confidence as she dispatches flights of fioriture, quietly caresses a spinning melodic line, colors her voice to suit the emotion of the moment, and inflects the text with uncommon theatrical energy. Luckily, she had a soprano partner—Maureen O'Flynn as Amenaide—with matching vocal sheen and technical skills, and their expert duetting was often ravishing. Doubtlessly with hundreds of new fans trouping after her, Kasarova now proceeds to the Metropolitan Opera, where she appears as Rossini's Rosina in a run of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* starting December 17. ■



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The myth of the West endures in 'Buffalo Soldiers,' a revisionist take on the black company that made the Plains safe for sheep.

WHY DANNY GLOVER SHOULD HAVE WANTED to go west again is mystifying. The token black in the first *Lonesome Dove*—that eight-hour, 2,500-mile mosey with many head of cattle to Montana from the Rio Grande, through sand storms and saddle sores, savage whoops and enormous Nielsens, during which men were hanged and women raped and children drowned in rivers full of water moccasins—he never even made it to a sequel. But Glover is not only back up on a horse in **Buffalo Soldiers** (Sunday, December 7; 8 to 10 P.M.; TNT) but also in uniform, in the midnight blues of the all-black Tenth Cavalry of the U.S. Army. The police business of Sergeant Washington Wyatt and his men, many of them just recently emancipated from slavery by the Civil War, is to make the Plains safe for sheep. They—the soldiers, that is—are, of course, ambivalent.

What an odd, revisionist dream of multi-race in the Old West. In fact, as brave as the Buffalo Soldiers may have been, they were so eager to please their paymasters that they signed on as reservation cops, strung up thousands of miles of telegraph wire, helped track down Geronimo, and assisted in the massacre at Wounded Knee. (They'd even follow Teddy Roosevelt to Cuba, and were equally dutiful servitors of the American imperium in the Philippines.) But in this more agreeable TV-movie fiction, they find themselves identifying with the very Apaches they've been sent to quell. They discover, so to speak, Freedom Issues. It's as if the Gurkhas had decided in India to side with Gandhi and shot their British officers.

On native grounds: Cavalryman Danny Glover and Indian scout Carl Lumbly in *Soldiers*.

Photograph by Erik Heinila, courtesy of TBS, Inc

I suppose if Kevin Costner can cross-dress like Lawrence of Arabia to prove his sincerity to the Lakota Sioux in *Dances With Wolves*, then Glover, who executive-produces as well as stars in *Buffalo Soldiers*, can Frantz-Fanon fantasize a liberation theology for the land-grabbing nineteenth century. It's not an accident that Wyatt and his troops happen on a lynching, by Texas Rangers of Apache children, in the first fifteen minutes. So resonant is the myth of the West that we all want a part of it, even Thelma and Louise. And we insist that it amount to more, symbolically, than clout, turf, sexual property rights, and how to look good dying. Why else would a Sidney Poitier show up in the *Children of the Dust* mini-series a few years ago gunslinging on behalf of black homesteaders in an Oklahoma territory that hadn't yet resolved its internal contradictions about the Trail of Tears? Weren't *Lonesome Dove* and at least one of its sequels also obsessed with half-breeds?

There is no sex in *Buffalo Soldiers*, although there's a lot of acting, most of it good enough to distract us from the unlikely story. Among the Buffalo Soldiers: Michael Warren (*Hill Street Blues*), Mykelti Williamson (*Con Air*), Clifton Powell (*Dead Presidents*), Glynn Thurman (*A Different World*), and Lamont Bentley (*Moesha*). As the Indian scout with the raised consciousness: a furious Carl Lumbly (*Cagney & Lacy*). As the white-liberal believer in an affirmative-action U.S. Army: a fatherly Bob Gunton. As the racist glory hound: a frothing Timothy Busfield (*thirtysomething*). From the wish-fulfilling script by Frank Military and Susan Rhinehart, Charles Haid directs as if he'd spent a lifetime contemplating these semiotic dreamscapes. And Glover wants to be iconic, a Nelson Mandela *and* a Clint Eastwood. He even sounds like Eastwood, as if his voice had been shot and dumped in an arroyo and pecked on by blackbirds.

RACE IS ALSO AN ISSUE IN ANOTHER PECULIAR TV MOVIE of the week. With Nigel Hawthorne as the aging Christian missionary who has disappeared into imponderable Africa, and Aidan Quinn as the intrepid young reporter sent by the New York *Herald* to find him, **Forbidden Territory: Stanley's Search for Livingstone** (Sunday, December 7; 9 to 11 P.M.; ABC) reprises the old Cedric Hardwicke–Spencer Tracy saga of "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" as an adventure in white morality. According to this flattering scheme, a righteous Livingstone pursues the source of the Nile only in order to expose the persistence of the Arab slave trade. And Stanley, born illegitimate in Wales, dumped by an unloving mother into foster homes and brutal workhouses, running away as a cabin boy to New Orleans and jumping ship to be more or less adopted by the wealthy merchant whose name he took, finds in this heroic doctor the father he never had, just in time to say at his funeral: "Africa was Livingstone's mother, and I am his son."

Some of this is true, and some of it is Stanley's sort of journalism. In fact, Livingstone stayed on fishing for souls in the Nile two years after Stanley found him. And Stanley ought to be better known as the buccaneer who gave King Leopold his Congo when the British didn't want it, and who was in the hot-headed habit, before and after Livingstone, of shooting those natives who got in his way. But Africa, in this *National Geographic* presentation, is once again that heart-of-darkness Rorschach blot in which the white Western pilgrim looks for the truth about himself, like Conrad, Flaubert, and Hemingway, like Graham Greene and André Gide, like Bellow and even Updike: a set for a safari of deracinated souls.

Hawthorne can't really be blamed for settling so comfortably into the frail saintliness his role requires of him. Dylan Baker has his brash moments as James Gordon Bennett, the editor of the *Herald;* Edward Fox, his plummy ones as Clements Markham, the symbol of Establishment England; and Fay Masterson, a freckled fecklessness as Alice Pike, the adorable squeeze to whom Stanley scribbles his forebodings. Quinn, of course, is always interesting to watch. He gets the violence in Stanley but seems somehow underwater when called upon to signal transformations of a deeper character, as if, after *An Early Frost,* he were still desperately seeking either Susan or the Lemon Sisters. Simon Langton (*Pride and Prejudice*) directs with every evidence of having found Kenya to be a perfectly adequate substitute for Zanzibar, and the natives—especially at a bonfire hootenanny—to be jolly good accessories to his imperial ensemble.

CLASS, NOT RACE, IS THE ISSUE IN **The Ripper** (Saturday, December 6; 8 to 10 P.M.; STARZ!), yet another lurid retrospection on the Whitechapel murders of the 1880s, with Patrick Bergin (*Patriot Games*) as the troubled investigating officer, Gabrielle Anwar (*Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead*) as a barmaid-witness, Michael York (*Cabaret,* etc.) as the commissioner of Scotland Yard, and Samuel West (*Howards End*) as Prince Edward. Filmed entirely on location in Melbourne, Australia, *The Ripper* presumes that this Prince "Eddie," not Dr. M. J. Druitt, was the real Jack—a theory first ingeniously elaborated by Phillipe Julien in *Edouard VII* (1962), and also the basis of a CBS mini-series several years ago with Michael Caine as the lower-class copper foiled in his detection by a royal cover-up.

What Caine lacked was a Gabrielle Anwar as a witness who could testify to the Ripper's "smelling like apricots," which is to say, like the diluted arsenic used at the time by the well-to-do to treat their syphilis. Eddie, we're told, had syphilis of the brain—"I wash, and I wash, and I'm never clean"—and so took to punishing similarly syphilitic prostitutes, to put them out of their East End misery. Though Bergin, too, is a rough child of the East End, he's been cosseted and buffed by his mentor York and longs for nothing so much as to be upwardly mobilized to genteel marriage and the proper clubs. Until, that is, he meets Gabrielle, whom he finds every bit as scrumptious as Al Pacino did in *Scent of a Woman,* even if he has to stash her in his own flat, in his own bed, to lure the royal Ripper out of hiding. (Offended by the plan, which is York's, Bergin is indignant: "This is not a goat!" he cries. "This is a woman!" And how.) Between Gabrielle and the English class system, it's no contest. Everybody will immigrate to a more egalitarian America. Meanwhile, because this is premium cable, the heterosex is bare-breasted and the disembowelings are especially grisly.

I enjoyed *The Ripper* more, perhaps, than I should have—and not only because of Anwar. It's nice to be reminded that serial killers weren't invented by American tabloids, Hollywood, or television. That long before the Boston Strangler and Son of Sam, before Hitchcock and Brian De Palma, there was not only I'm-Not-All-Right-Jack but also the Vampire of Dusseldorf and the Silesian Bluebeard. That Weimar, for instance, was as kinky-sick as Whitechapel, according to novels by Alfred Döblin and Hermann Hesse, films by Fritz Lang, paintings by Kurt Schwitters and Otto Dix (who depicted himself as a "Sex Murderer," smearing the canvas with red handprints), plays by Frank Wedekind (who starred himself onstage as the Ripper, and cast his wife as a victim), and graphics by George Grosz (who had himself photographed as Jack among mirrors, masks, and dolls). And that Picasso, in *Demoiselles d'Avignon,* and Klee, in *Dogmatic Composition,* would also more than dabble in the mutilation of female bodies. But that would get us into what Maria Tatar in *Lustmord* called "the gender politics of cultural production." And we would have to think about whether Prince Eddie was a Modernist. ■

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SO YOU THINK THE LIFE OF A RESTAURANT CRITIC is sheer bliss. Imagine being paid to eat, feeding friends and family on somebody else's nickel, being fussed over and indulged as if you were Sharon Stone. When I was a hungry civilian devouring every pat and pan by the legendary Craig Claiborne in the New York *Times,* I longed to be his Eve Harrington. Even now, there are nights I get truffled into the illusion that the rondelet of tasting is a lark. Then comes a cataclysmic night when nothing works. I'm standing at the rail of the *Titanic,* and my pals are alternately laughing and waxing indignant: How did we get ourselves into this charade?

A taggle of veterans—from Bouley and Jean-Claude, the memo says—have sunk their capital into **Capitol,** a bar-lounge with sushi on the Lower East Side (29 Second Avenue, near 1st Street; 228-3236). Cool spot after a night on the club creep, no? I mean if you're of an age and metabolism that thinks cool is cool. Me, I've never been cool, or hip when hip was cool. But if it's hot, I've got to be there. Hearing that the guy palming the rice bundles at Capitol is a veteran of Nobu gets my attention. That's hot. So I get my gal-pal, the Cassandra of the night, to meet us there for a sushi aperitif before dinner.

To put it kindly, the space is willfully unfinished. Let's just speak the truth: It's a cavernous dump. Granted, someone did a decent job subtly splotching the yellow walls. But the ceiling is battered, and there's a serious draft from the rotting window frames. Not that the modish, aren't-we-clever-to-be-here-first crowd notices or cares as it cuddles and kisses and assumes self-conscious postures at the bar and in what passes for a lounge. Shivering in a catbird-corner-seat, we ask for tea.

Convivial pursuit: Paradise found at Pó on Cornelia Street.

Photograph by Robert Wright.

"We don't serve tea," says the waiter with not a flicker of regret or apology, as if this were not outrageously quirky in a sushi latitude. And no hope of getting hot sake, either. It seems there's no stove in the place, not even a hot plate. We order a few appetizers to hold us till our friend arrives.

"If you're going to want sushi, you might order it now," the waiter advises. "We've lost our other sushi chef, and things are a little backed up." How backed up? He shrugs and looks around. "Maybe 45 minutes."

Forty-five minutes for sushi? Oh, dear, we've got a 9:45 dinner reservation across town. Shall we sit and suffer or ask for a Cosmopolitan so we can blend in with the crowd? I can see the hapless surviving chef is working five sushi platters at once. We watch them disappear around the room. This is the moment we should hit the sidewalk. A little voice inside my brain is crying out, "Do you really want to eat raw fish in a place like this?" But we linger, sharing bites when the warmish specimens finally arrive. We can die together. I bite into the cooked shrimp riding riceback—it has a skinlike gauze as if slightly fossilized. "Stop," I cry. We pay the check and flee. (P.S.: the Nobu connection was just a false rumor.)

Now what was I thinking when I chose **August** (202 Ninth Avenue, near 22nd Street; 989-2002) for dinner this particular Saturday night? New in Chelsea, with a chef from Quilty's and rotating artwork on the walls, August had landed a top spot on my "to scout" list. My best friend's hairdresser said he loved it and hoped I'd go soon and write about it so it would survive. Not exactly weighty reconnaissance, I know. But Cassandra is always game, unlike the friends who take it as a personal insult if we go anywhere that's not wonderful. ("Now you owe us a good one," they'll tell me.) The professional foodnik joining our trio for Round Two insists he's here for the chatter and doesn't expect or require gastronomic epiphany.

Clearly, Chelsea has already discovered the place. Pushed-together tables of partying youth fan the roar, though the date-night twosies don't seem to mind as they tackle the house burgers under haystacks of fries. "If this doesn't work, we're just minutes from a fabulous new sushi bar called Taka," I promise my co-conspirators. "The chef is a woman, and she's supposedly great."

A glance at the menu shows that chef Kevin Roth is more taken with Asian metaphor than is Katy Sparks, his gifted boss at Quilty's. Both the ginger-and-pepper-seared tuna and crisp-fried calamari with nuoc cham (the Far Eastern fish sauce I love) are certainly pleas-

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ant enough. But the clumsy pot stickers and down-market Caesar combined with the din make me feel we must go elsewhere to save the night.

Cassandra runs off to call **Taka** (61 Grove Street; 242-3699). "They'll take us if we arrive by eleven," she says.

I groan. That gives us just seven minutes.

"You two go—grab a taxi and hold the fort," says my mate, the Road Food Warrior. "We'll follow as soon as I pay the check."

Locked in Saturday-night Village traffic with an impatient driver, we can't seem to find it. "You have to get out," says the driver. "I already stopped the meter."

"Taka," we call out to passing pedestrians. "Taka, where is it? Taka, you know, sushi?" What a panic. They stare at us. Finally—yes—recognition. A finger points across the street. Against the light, into traffic, dodging taxis, ignoring hurled scatological and sexual innuendo, Cassandra and I race up the stairs into Taka. Blank stares greet us. Behind the counter stands not Taka herself, slivering miracles, but a man in white with a knife, stern and forbidding. "We're closed," he says. "But you promised if we got here close to eleven," my friend ad-libs. She finally surrenders and joins the reunited posse on the sidewalk. "I don't believe it," she snorts. "He said they were out of rice."

"What next?"

"Where are we?" I ask, exhausted and glum. I have a hundred places on my must-do list. But my mind is blank.

"Pearl Oyster Bar is fun," says the pro. The four of us race-walk to Cornelia Street. The chef-owner, Rebecca Charles, welcomes him but is clearly dismayed. "We were just cleaning up for the night," she says. Our fourth, a regular customer, hopes to persuade her to serve us anyway. But I hate eating when the staff has a foot out the door.

ACROSS THE STREET, **PÓ** IS BUSTLING. ALAS, there's a restless cluster of people waiting inside and a couple huddled on the sidewalk bench in the 40-degree chill. The Road Food Warrior is no longer hungry. He heads for home. We stubborn survivors sip red wine near the bar, debating whether it's proper for the coatroom attendant to be reading a book, using a paper crucifix for a marker. At last, a table, and instantly from the kitchen, a welcoming bruschetta, garlicky white beans spiked with a good telltale balsamic tang and piled high on freshly grilled bread.

I've never written about Pó. A very early tasting discouraged me. But serious food friends always rave. And now I know why. Even though it feels like we've been eating nonstop for hours, it's impossible to simply sample the fabulous chestnut tagliarini and its lush veal sauce. Is it overglopped in the American style? Of course. I'd expect no less from Mario Batali, who is beyond life-size himself—too big for these pocket-size quarters, with his freckles and long ponytail, his ebullience and his bare legs in cutoffs. I'm finding the linguine with pancetta, clams, and hot chilies surprisingly timid. And the broccoli rabe salad with barley, sun-dried eggplant, and caciotta cheese rather weird, though we're all snatching at the greens.

Trip to bountiful: *in medias* dinner at Pó.

But the chef emerges and drops a plate on the table, and suddenly we are mesmerized by pappardelle elevated to sainthood with butter, egg, and white truffle. It may be madness on the cholesterol scale, but even the most disciplined fatphobe at the table is a goner. Baby octopus grilled whole with cipolline onions, radicchio, and a blood-orange rouille is wildly rich and delicious, too, but almost prudent next to sensational braised stuffed oxtail, a gelatinous ooze of meat and fat with slightly firm cubes of pumpkin in a honeyed pepper glaze. Melted red cabbage, cloves of sweet garlic, and a balsamic-vinegar lacing rockets usually boring salmon to an impressive high.

Campari-grapefruit sorbetto, bitter and tart, is probably the only sensible defense against such overkill, but coffee gelato "drowned" in chilled cappuccino with chocolate caramel will keep you awake tonight through at least a few sections of the new Technicolor *Times*. Or do as we did and go for vanilla panna cotta cleverly sauced with tangy pomegranate, the poached pear in a puddle of homemade mascarpone, and the Pó sundae—pumpkin gelato lapped with chocolate and sprinkled with cinnamon-toasted pumpkin seeds. And sleep through *The McLaughlin Group* yellfest Sunday morning.

Pó, 31 Cornelia Street (645-2189). Lunch, Wednesday through Sunday from 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. Dinner, Tuesday through Thursday from 5:30 to 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday till 11:30 p.m., Sunday from 5 to 10 p.m. A.E. ■

Photograph by Robert Wright.

A Weekly Guide to Entertainment and the Arts in New York

Jamming With Santa

Twelve outstanding seasonal concerts, from caroling walks to chamber ensembles (page 115)

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movies

Cindy Sherman's *Office Killer*...Spanish Cinema Today

New Films

Ground Rules:

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by David Denby...A ★ denotes a current release that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element...Reviews are followed by the Manhattan theaters where the film is playing.

Alien Resurrection—Sigourney Weaver is back in the gunk again as Ripley, the indefatigable fighter against the dastardly Other. Weaver, whose career in movies has been rather peculiar, stoops to pick up oozing white stuff. They are here: "You will die," she informs the other humans. *Alien Resurrection*, the fourth in a series that began in 1979, is a movie of monstrous deaths, monstrous births. Dead 200 years, Ripley is reconstructed by scientists from her DNA, and when she is full-grown, the alien she was carrying inside her when she died in the last movie (remember?) is also ready for life. Scientists extract the creature, which is what they really want—Ripley, it turns out, was only a "carrier." The men in white coats mutter something about getting "vaccines" from the resurrected alien, but apart from that, we never really know why they bring back an animal that enjoys chewing on the human race. Her features frozen, Weaver gives off a certain sardonic coldness toward the humans—she's disdainful of both the scientists and the scruffy crew of a pirate spaceship (including Winona Ryder) that shows up with additional human "carriers" for the scientists to play with. Sigourney Weaver is an imposing figure (without being an interesting screen actress), and she has some eerie scenes: Ripley the superwoman, facing down the pirate thugs, plays basketball and stops the ball cold with outstretched palm as if her hand were lined with Krazy Glue. There is some visual excitement early on—steamy corridors in a black spaceship, an exciting underwater sequence. But a franchise becomes a franchise because it delivers certain staple pleasures or shocks, and payoff time comes soon enough in the usual form of dripping, fanged, death's-head creatures with iron teeth ripping through bodies. The movie is fueled by a powerful disgust, but disgust at what? Made-up creatures? Welcome to the movies of the late nineties: rage without purpose, threat without meaning, horror without relief. (Denby; 12/1/97) (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) *Village East; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; Criterion Center; 86th Street; First & 62nd St. Cinema; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Nova; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld.*

Anastasia—The animated adventures of the Romanov princess. Voices by Meg Ryan, John Cusack, and Angela Lansbury. (1 hr. 36 mins.; G) *Art Greenwich Twin; Chelsea; Murray Hill Cinemas; Coronet; Ziegfeld; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Nova; Olympia Theatre; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Bang—When an out-of-work actress is assaulted by an L.A.P.D. motorcycle cop, she puts on his uniform and spends the day dispensing her own kind of justice. Directed by Ash. (1 hr. 38 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

Bean—Bean (Rowan Atkinson) is a sleepy, inept guard at the National Gallery in London. When a pretentious California museum buys Whistler's Mother from the gallery, the Brits send him to the Americans as an alleged expert on the painting. Bean—or Dr. Bean, as everyone calls him—never clears up the confusion and of course wreaks havoc on the nervous, hapless Yanks. There are a couple of classic bits, but Bean's not saying anything and his temperamental remoteness is a limitation. The major trouble, however, is that Bean isn't a rich enough character for a full-length movie. Atkinson has magnificently awful physical equipment, but at the moment, he's a comic without a soul. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; Criterion Center; 86th Street; New York Twin; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; Main Street Cinemas.*

Bent—Ian McKellen, Clive Owen, and Mick Jagger star in the screen version of Martin Sherman's play about gay Berlin during Hitler's rise to power. (1 hr. 44 mins.; NC-17) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Square.*

★Boogie Nights—A kind of ragamuffin epic about the San Fernando Valley porn industry. Much of the film is funny and touching, and even rather sweet. It stretches from 1977 to 1984—the disco-and-cocaine period of bell-bottom L.A.—and covers the varying fortunes of a small group of porn actors, filmmakers, and hangers-on gathered under the wing of Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds), an avuncular producer who likes to have people hang out at his house. Horner takes one look at Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg), a busboy in a Valley club, and decides that Eddie has got the stuff. He picks up Eddie by using one of his minor actresses, Rollergirl (Heather Graham), who strips down to her skates and jumps on Eddie at Horner's house, while Jack, appraising, watches the show. Mark Wahlberg may have something in his pants, but there's no gleam in his eye. What Wahlberg does best is convey Eddie's desperation. His Eddie wants success and money, but he doesn't desire anyone; he wants other people to desire him. In Wahlberg's scenes with Julianne Moore—who plays Amber Waves, a female porn star—Moore does most of the work. Moore, a great actress, has red, red lips and lambent flesh, yet her eyes are anxious; she's a kind of neurotic siren, always available but frantically unhappy. *Boogie Nights* is made up of many vignettes, and while Anderson is a good observer, he hasn't really shaped the screenplay. (Denby; 10/20/97) (2 hrs. 37 mins.; R) *Village East; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Embassy 2–4; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square.*

★Devil's Advocate—Al Pacino stars as John Milton, the head of an international law firm in New York. Milton recruits a hotshot lawyer from small-town Florida who has never lost a case—Kevin Lomax (Keanu Reeves), who arrives in the dazzling big city with his beautiful wife, Mary Ann (Charlize Theron), and receives the best of everything. Kevin takes on the case of a big-deal real-estate developer (Craig T. Nelson) who may have killed his wife, but as he becomes absorbed in the case he neglects Mary Ann, who gets set upon by Satan and his minions. Parts of the movie are disturbingly sensual, and the scenes of deluxe New York life, conventional as they are, might easily impress a small-town boy as the height of sophistication. At the end, however, we go beyond entertaining gothic kitsch into some never-never land of movie awfulness. Hellfires burn, bodies writhe, and the movie goes up in flames. But *The Devil's Advocate* is fun for a while. (Denby; 10/27/97) (2 hrs. 20 mins.; R) *19th Street East; 34th Street Showplace; Gemini; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Plaza Twin.*

Eve's Bayou—A little girl in Louisiana discovers the mix of fact, fiction, and fantasy in her family's lives. Starring Samuel L. Jackson, Lynn Whitfield, Diahann Carroll, Branford Marsalis, and Kasi Lemmons. (1 hr. 49 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 19th Street East; 86th Street; Lincoln Square.*

Fairytale—A True Story—Peter O'Toole and Harvey Keitel star as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini in this story of two young girls who claim they've photographed fairies in England during World War I. (1 hr. 39 mins.; PG) *Main Street Cinemas.*

Flubber—Robin Williams stars in an update of 1961's *The Absent Minded Professor.* (1 hr. 33 mins.; PG) *Village East; Chelsea West; Guild 50th Street; Sutton; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld.*

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In Cindy Sherman's Office Killer, Carol Kane plays an overlooked and overworked copy editor who decides to rub out her magazine's entire masthead, starting with fellow *Constant Consumer* staff members Barbara Sukowa and Jeanne Tripplehorn (below). Every unappreciated, underpaid underling's quiet fantasy opens Wednesday, December 3, at Film Forum.

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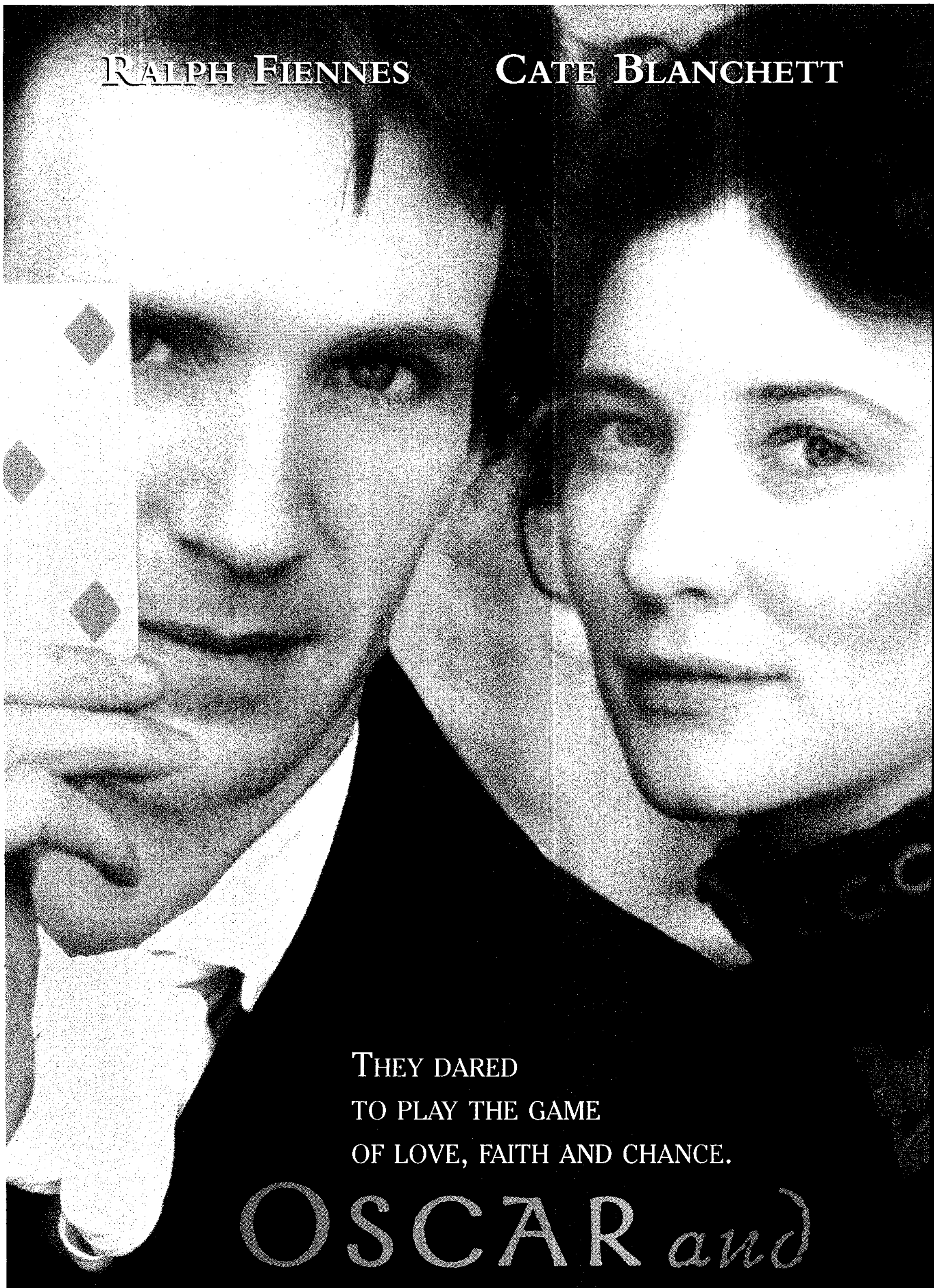

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The Full Monty—Robert Carlyle stars as Gaz, an out-of-work steelworker in Sheffield, England, who rounds up his unemployed friends and persuades them to put together a male strip troupe. Directed by Peter Cattaneo. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Quad Cinema; Murray Hill Cinemas; Embassy 1; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

★**Gattaca**—The first feature by the writer-director Andrew Niccol is about a society that rigidly divides humans that are perfectly engineered from those known as faith babies—people with the ordinary mix of strengths and physical susceptibilities. Ethan Hawke, clean-shaven and very fit, is one of the latter. Always on the verge of being discovered, he meets a kind of mate in the elongated and smirking Uma Thurman, who, like him, has an ailing heart. Gattaca is not pop science fiction in the *Star Wars* mold but a serious and intelligent movie, with an inexpensive but handsome design, good music by Michael Nyman, and perceptive observations of such all-too-human elements as friendship and rivalries between brothers. (Denby; 11/10/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; Embassy 2–4; 86th Street East.*

Good Will Hunting—See Denby, page 62. (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

Habit—A grungy guy gets involved with a modern-day Vampira who bites him during their amorous encounters and pulls his already muddled life into a scruffy downward spiral. Written and directed by Larry Fessenden, who also stars. (1 hr. 52 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village 12th St.*

Happy Together—Cannes winner about two Hong Kong expats working on their relationship while stuck in Buenos Aires. Directed by Wong Kar-Wai. (1 hr. 37 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

★**The House of Yes**—In the eighties, young Marty Pascal (Josh Hamilton) returns home to his mother's house in Washington, D.C., with his innocent fiancée (Tori Spelling) in tow. It's a Tennessee Williams house, a big bad house with a Secret. Marty's dad died—was shot, perhaps—the same day that JFK was shot, and Marty's sister, who calls herself Jackie-O (Parker Posey), has become obsessed with both deaths and lives in a mad dream world. Her mother (Genevieve Bujold) makes malicious and ironic jokes, sometimes at her own expense; her younger brother (Freddie Prinze Jr.) is some sort of school dropout who puts the moves on Marty's fiancée as quickly as he can. There's something weird and sexual going on between Marty and Jackie-O and there's a gun that goes off the way guns in plays are supposed to go off (at the end). *The House of Yes* is a hothouse plant and only of limited interest, but it's the kind of small demonstration piece that could open up a variety of careers. (Denby; 10/27/97) (1 hr. 27 mins.; R) *Screening Room; 62nd and Broadway.*

How I Spent My Summer Vacation—African-American college students grapple with love and relationships as school lets out for summer. By first-time director John Fisher. (1 hr. 15 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

Anniversary Silver Belle

The Quad Cinema—the last, best scene-less place to catch a foreign or independent film—opened 25 years ago this month. To celebrate, New York's first multiplex is cutting concession prices to numbers that (loosely) translate into 1972 figures: the soda, for example, starts at 50 cents; popcorn, a mere 25. Through December 7.

I Know What You Did Last Summer—The past comes back to torment four teenagers a year after they accidentally kill someone and dispose of the body. Jennifer Love Hewitt stars in this horror film written by *Scream*'s Kevin Williamson. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Chelsea; Criterion Center; Brooklyn Heights; Kingsway.*

The Ice Storm—The normally protected reaches of New Canaan, Connecticut, are violated by a sinister snapping noise—the sound of frozen power lines falling in a shower of sparks. Where are we, at the bottom circle of Dante's Inferno, where tears turn to ice? No, only in the land of suburban Wasps, where everything is a little weird. The movie is set in the early seventies and two families are falling apart. The husband and father (Kevin Kline) in one of these families, the Hoods, is having a tepid affair with Janey Carver, the wife and mother (Sigourney Weaver) in the other. At the same time, Hood's 14-year-old daughter, Wendy (Christina Ricci), who likes to expose herself, is fooling around with Janey's two sons (Elijah Wood and Adam Hann-Byrd). Paul Hood, Ben's 16-year-old son, is the narrator. Paul's bemused face and hapless attempts to bed a prep-school girl are, in the performance by Tobey Maguire, about the movie's liveliest elements. These people are just pathetic; they behave badly, and they don't even get any fun out of it. Director Ang Lee's touch is very delicate, and the movie's perfection of bleakness offers a refined pleasure (of a sort). But the material doesn't quite play. If, at one end of the spectrum, *The Ice Storm* is like Mazursky without the laughs, at the other it's like Bergman without the anguished brilliance. (Denby; 10/6/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Murray Hill Cinemas; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

The Jackal—Bruce Willis is a killer for hire and Richard Gere an Irish terrorist with a good heart who tries to stop him from shooting someone very, very important. A master of disguises, Willis wears a variety of bizarre outfits and mustaches, and in one sequence, eager to pick up a gay man in a bar, he dons a blondined wig that makes him look rather cute. These sudden shifts in apparel—Willis might be a guest on an old TV variety show—are about the only amusement in a pedestrian thriller that does everything by rote. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 23 mins.; R) *Art Greenwich Twin; Chelsea West; Coronet; National Theatre; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Kiss or Kill—Two drifting grifters (Frances O'Connor and Matt Day) take to the Australian road and leave a trail of bodies behind them. Directed by Bill Bennett. (1 hr. 26 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Pavilion Theatre.*

★**Mad City**—Dustin Hoffman is at the top of his game in *Mad City*, Costa Gavras's glum morality tale about the depredations of the media. Hoffman plays a former big-time TV reporter who has been busted down to a local California station after running afoul of the network's star anchor (Alan Alda). While doing a nothing story at a local natural-history museum, a fired employee—Sam Baily (John Travolta), a guard—barges back into the museum to plead for his job with his ex-boss (Blythe Danner). Hoping to be taken seriously, Sam carries a gun, and when the gun goes off by accident, wounding another guard, and Sam locks the door, shutting in some schoolchildren, Hoffman knows that he's right in the middle of a media gold mine—a hostage situation. The movie says that television appropriates human tragedy for its own benefit. True enough, though the real problem is that few of us have the strength to turn off the set. (Denby; 11/17/97) (1 hr. 54 mins.; PG-13) *Chelsea; Criterion Center; Orpheum 7; Centre Sunnyside.*

The Man Who Knew Too Little—Bill Murray is an Iowa video-store clerk let loose in London with a ticket to a participatory theater experience that unwittingly becomes the real thing. With Peter Gallagher and Joanne Whalley (1 hr. 32 mins.; PG) *Village East; 19th Street East; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; Movieworld.*

★**Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil**—Kevin Spacey plays Jim Williams, the real-life Savannah plutocrat and antiques dealer who empties a gun into his nasty young lover (Jude Law) and goes on trial for murder. The movie, adapted from John Berendt's best-seller by screenwriter John Lee Hancock and directed by Clint Eastwood, preserves Berendt's portrait of Savannah as an odd but vibrant moss-hung backwater of the old South. There's nothing vulgar or forced or too explicit in the movie, and he shares and even amplifies Berendt's live-and-let-live manner. *Midnight*, however, suffers from a rare fault: It's a little underpowered and almost too pleased with its own easy affability. Berendt's autobiographical writer figure has been given a name, John Kelso (John Cusack, charming as always), given a love interest (Alison Eastwood, Clint's appealing daughter), and made more active than the author's modest, recording "I." Berendt gives quite a bit of space to the witty black transvestite Lady Chablis, who has only a marginal connection to Jim Williams and his lover, and Eastwood uses her heavily, too—uses the real Lady Chablis (né Frank Deveau), who has a dynamite figure, arms like blades, and a richly insinuating manner sharp enough to . . . well, to peel a grape. The movie compresses four trials stretching over eight years into a single trial (dominated by Jack Thompson, the superb Australian actor doing an expert imitation of a good ol' boy). In the end, *Midnight* is a meditation on the unknowability of the truth. (Denby; 12/1/97) (2 hrs. 35 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; 72nd St. East; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

Mortal Kombat: Annihilation—A group of heroes fight off a warlord trying to take over the earth. Starring model-actresses Talisa Soto and Irina Pantaeva. This sequel to *Mortal Kombat* is directed by John Leonetti. (1 hr. 33 mins.; PG-13) *Village East;*

19th Street East; Astor Plaza; Crown Gotham; 86th Street East; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Nova; Plaza .

★Mrs. Brown—Director John Madden successfully captures the immense weight of the imperial state as it awkwardly follows in the wake of Victoria's sorrow. At his wit's end, the queen's secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby (the baleful Geoffrey Palmer), hits on the idea of calling back into royal service Prince Albert's groom, John Brown (Billy Connolly), a Highlands Scot whom the prince had been fond of. Brown shows up and tells the queen, to the court's shocked dismay, that she looks awful. The queen suffers Brown's impertinence, and they become friends, at which point the London scandal sheets begin referring to her as "Mrs. Brown." *Mrs. Brown,* with its misty highlands and severely luxurious royal rooms, is very handsome, but the dim light of rectitude rules the court, and I was highly grateful for the presence of Antony Sher, who plays Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Sher's Disraeli is the only one shrewd enough to know that Brown, Victoria's half-mad imaginary lover, is the man to bring Victoria back into the public's eye, which is finally the only place she belongs. (Denby; 7/28/97) (1 hr. 43 mins.; PG) *Eastside Playhouse.*

Office Killer—A magazine copy editor loses her cool and starts murdering her dismissive coworkers. Cindy Sherman's directorial debut. (1 hr. 21 mins; NR) *Opens Wednesday at Film Forum.*

One Night Stand—See Denby, page 62. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 59th Street East; Criterion Center; Lincoln Square.*

Other Voices, Other Rooms—Truman Capote's first novel is adapted by Brit David Rocksavage and novelist Sara Flanigan. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Village East and Cinema 3rd Ave.*

★The Peacemaker—*The Peacemaker* is powerful and consistently exciting. It's also a great deal too much like many other thrillers made recently. Playing a brilliant scientist (you can't make these movies anymore without one), Nicole Kidman may not be very convincing when she speaks techno-jargon, but she's extremely charming. George Clooney, whose self-sufficient manner is the latest style in smart-ass one-upmanship, is the special-ops colonel who thinks he can teach the scientist the nasty facts of life. Here's the deal: A rogue Russian general has stolen the nukes from a train; the general then wrecks the train and detonates one of the warheads in order to cover his tracks. Clooney thinks that nothing but money is at stake—a quick sale to Iran, perhaps. Kidman fears a fanatic with a single warhead more than a greedy cynic with eight warheads. They are both right. The movie turns into an elaborate chase, with Kidman and Clooney tracking the thieves by means of electronic surveillance, then helicopter, and, at last, on foot through the streets of Manhattan. For all its professed horror of a nuclear catastrophe, *The Peacemaker* is rather casual about the bomb that does go off in the Urals. But director Mimi Leder can certainly move the metal with the best of them. (Denby; 9/29/97) (2 hrs. 2 mins.; R) *Worldwide Cinemas.*

The Rainmaker—See Denby, page 62. (2 hrs. 13 mins.; PG-13) *Waverly; 19th Street East; 34th Street Showplace; First & 62nd St. Cinema; UA East; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Nova; Olympia Theatre; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld; Plaza ; The Movies at Bayside.*

Red Corner—Richard Gere stars as an entertainment lawyer imprisoned in China for a murder he didn't commit. With Bai Ling. (1 hr. 59 mins.; R) *34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; National Theatre; Orpheum 7; 84th Street.*

★Shall We Dance?—The hero, Shohei Suhiyama (Koji Yakusho), a fortyish accountant, with a wife and daughter tucked away in a suburban house, sneaks off to a dancing school as if indulging a hidden vice. There he meets the other guilty men, all of whom, overcoming hideous shyness, stumble through beginner's agonies in the waltz, tango, and rumba. The teachers, accomplished woman dancers, do what they can with this recalcitrant material, and Shohei falls in love with one of them, Mai (Tamiyo Kusakari), a tall, lovely girl who has her own guilty secret. At times, the movie (written and directed by Masayuki Suo) comes close to embarrassment: For us, all this exquisite Japanese tact seems so nuttily beside the point. Yet it's hard not to be touched when the men speak of their pleasure in movement, and when Shohei, though not a natural, dons a beautiful tux and achieves a proud competency in a ballroom competition. (Denby; 7/28/97) (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG) *Screening Room; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Festival
The New Iberians

A new generation of Spanish filmmakers remains true to its industry's spirited history—while adapting a few typical Tinseltown story lines—at this year's "Spanish Cinema Now!" The roster includes classic coming-of-age journeys (like 'The Good Life,' below), road-trip movies, and screen adaptations of literary masterpieces. Starts Friday at the Walter Reade Theater. See "Museums, Societies, Etc.," for more info.

Photograph by M. Casas/The Film Society at Lincoln Center.

Sick—The moving life chronicle of artist, poet, and supermasochist Bob Flanagan. (1 hr. 29 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

Starship Troopers—At the repulsive climax of the film, which is about endless war between earthlings and giant outerplanetary spiders, a human captive is dragged forward and made to face an enormous "brain bug." At last! We're about to get an answer to the question tormenting us. Throughout the war, it's been understood that the bugs have been too stupid to win. But recently, arachnid intelligence has been improving. After all, they have managed to wipe out Buenos Aires (or is it all of South America? Anyway, they kill a lot of people). Where does the new intellectual prowess come from? Finally, we find out: The brain bug plunges a tubelike tentacle into the captive's head and sucks out his gray matter. So that's how they do it. But we wonder: Is there also a hidden metaphor here? Director Paul Verhoeven seems to have undergone, in Hollywood, a draining operation of his own. As you watch the endless carnage, you become sure that Hollywood has gone completely, utterly mad. Verhoeven may have had his brains removed, but it's the audience that winds up with a hole in the head. (Denby; 11/17/97) (2 hrs. 9 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 34th Street Showplace; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Centre Sunnyside; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

The Tango Lesson—Sally Potter writes, directs, and stars in this way-cerebral story of tango dancing and one woman's obsession with it. (1 hr. 41 mins.; PG) *Angelika Film Center; Regency.*

Tar—The story of two former high-school sweethearts who cross paths and discover that one is now a cop, the other a criminal. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) *Embassy 2-4.*

★The Sweet Hereafter—Atom Egoyan's film is a rarity—a glum, rather painful movie that is so beautifully made, so complexly imagined, that one accepts its sadness, at first grudgingly and then willingly, as an artist's necessary voice. A big-city lawyer, Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), enters a snowy, forlorn town in British Columbia after fourteen children have died and travels about interviewing the parents and survivors, desperate to enlist everyone, including the teenage survivor, Nicole (Sarah Polley), in a grievance suit. As Stephens investigates, we see what led up to the accident—the family life of the town, with its fissures and its secrets, including adultery and a suggestion of incest—and eventually we see the accident itself. The film cuts backward and forward in time, and we expect that Stephens will uncover some amazing circumstance that will explain everything. The detective story yields to a moral inquiry about the value of community and the nature of bonds, both corrupt and pure, between parents and children, with Stephens less the hero of the inquiry than its fool. From the first, Egoyan shows us what's driving him. Stephens's own daughter, Zoe, is a drug addict, a lost, lying girl, always in trouble, and she telephones him constantly. Stephens is trapped—caught between adoration and contempt, and left with an unappeasable desire to avenge the destruction of children everywhere. This is Ian Holm's greatest role in the movies. Atom Egoyan has a rapt, mysterious style. He uses the cold winter landscapes for their tranquil menace, but he knows when to play for a larger, more sinister effect. We experience the accident through the eyes of Billy (Bruce Greenwood), who is driving behind the bus and is the father of two of the children. Billy sees; he's the hero of the movie, an unillusioned man, rejecting avenging lawyers and bad-luck omens in favor of the most bitter reality. His adulterous scenes with Alberta Watson (the mother in David O. Russell's *Spanking the Monkey*) have an acrid intimacy. The actors are all excellent in a plain style that avoids irony, pose, perversity. By the end of the movie, everything comes together—the answer to the detective inquiry is all that is most difficult to face in life. If there were many movies as reality-bound as this one, I think I would go mad. That this one exists, however, is almost a blessing. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Twisted—A loosely adapted version of *Oliver Twist,* set in a gay underworld of New York. Starring the late William Hickey. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday.*

★Washington Square—A plain, awkward girl who happens to be an heiress, Catherine Sloper (Jennifer Jason Leigh), meets a handsome young man, Morris Townsend (Ben Chaplin), at an elaborate garden party. No man of comparable beauty, or any beauty at all, has paid her much attention in her life, which has been led entirely under the gaze of her father, Dr. Sloper (Albert Finney), a widower of sardonic speech and dictatorial temperament. Morris is not only good-looking but also charming, ardent, and, as far as Catherine can tell, entirely taken with her. Is he serious? A mere opportunist? Catherine's father is sure that he is after her fortune. Director Agnieszka Holland gives every emotion its full stop. If the results aren't in line with James's tone—one of suavity yielding to outbursts of candor—the movie often works on its own terms as emotional drama. Jason Leigh is about half the size of Ben Chaplin, whose Morris Townsend nearly devours Catherine, and she's ready to be devoured. Albert Finney, however, is something of a brute. He seems to have wandered in from another set, where Dickens was being adapted. But Chaplin and Jason Leigh keep the movie on track. Henry James gave Catherine dignity in withdrawal; Holland, in a series of final radiant close-ups, makes her a force. It's a feminist reading of the text but not a vulgarization of it. (Denby; 10/13/97) (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG) *Paris Theatre.*

★**Welcome to Sarajevo**—This film, which follows the adventures of some Western journalists during the siege of Sarajevo in 1992, is a noble try, but it's a thing of shreds and patches—a mix of documentary footage, acted-out scenes based on true stories, and a general atmosphere of suffering, bravado, and endurance. Written by Frank Cottrell Boyce and directed by Michael Winterbottom (both Brits), it doesn't really work as a movie—there are too many powerful fragments, too many scenes only half developed—but I'm still very glad I saw it. Woody Harrelson is the prime peacock here, a flippant, often drunk, but secretly brave and caring star reporter. Woody and his colleagues—female as well as male—find it hard to leave Sarajevo. Many months go by, and they are still hunkering down at night in the dark hotel, drinking and making mock passes at one another. They have become attached to the city as a cause as well as addicted to their own courage in covering it; they combine daring and egotism in ways that aren't easy to judge. The documentary scenes of massacre and destruction are a lot more powerful on the big screen than they ever were on TV, where they could easily be ignored. In the movie, the journalists covering the story appear to know that, particularly the British TV reporter played by Michael Henderson (based on ITN's Michael Nicholson), a man who wanders through the ravaged city in a bleak, unappeasable rage. Henderson centers his anxieties on some children in an orphanage, covering their story again and again, and when relief help shows up (in the unconvincing presence of Marisa Tomei), he tries to sneak one 9-year-old girl out as his adopted daughter. In general, the shifts back and forth between documentary and acted scenes aren't very successful. Some of us may find it hard to put up with actors striking resolute poses right after scenes of people lying on the street with their legs blown off. Inevitably, the "upbeat" story of a reporter taking a girl out of hell and relocating her to a sunny, idyllic garden in England strikes us as a sentimentalization of what the documentary camera, in the rest of the movie, can't help seeing—the fabric of life ripped, torn, and almost obliterated. (Denby; 12/1/97) (1 hr. 41 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Square.*

★**The Wings of the Dove**—The movie differs from Henry James's novel in a hundred particulars, but the great point is that it works on its own terms, which is all one can ask. At the center, there are two young people who love each other but need money. Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter), clever, beautiful, and distinguished, lives in London with her wealthy aunt (Charlotte Rampling), who is determined to marry her off to a rich man and who does what she can to break up Kate's relationship with the charming but penurious young journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache). We are drawn to Bonham Carter's intelligence, even though her Kate is not brave enough to live with Densher in poverty. Kate plays for the largest stakes; she wants her handsome young man and she wants to be rich, too. By degrees, and without his quite understanding it, Densher gets pulled into a conspiracy that Kate engineers. For there is another young person in their social circle, the fabulously wealthy American heiress Millie Theale (Alison Elliott), who is sweet, generous, and wasting away from some nameless disease. Millie needs a lover; she needs to live. Kate, who genuinely likes her, wants Millie to be happy and to know love—with Densher, who would then inherit the money, after Millie's death, that would allow Kate to marry him. Kate's motives are mixed, both selfless and selfish, benevolent and sinister, and she corrupts Densher with her provocative ambivalence. Because he's such a splendid fellow, Densher's puzzlement as Kate pushes him into Millie's arms is painful; his anger and sexual aggression as he realizes how he is being used become the dramatic high point of the movie. The complicating factor—Henry James always has a complicating factor—is that Densher falls for Millie; or rather, he falls for her desire to experience everything she can before dying. The filmmakers have aggressively bumped the period ahead from 1902 to 1910; the characters take the subway, smoke cigarettes furiously and attend a gallery exhibit of Klimt's decadent nudes. We get the point: Kate Croy and Merton Densher are modern personalities, rebels against the constrictions of their time. Rebellion is certainly not something that Henry James had in mind, but it's a minor vulgarization. (Denby; 11/10/97) (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Beekman; Lincoln Square.*

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

Angelika Film Center—18 W. Houston St. (995-2000) *Bent; Gummo; The Ice Storm; The Tango Lesson; The Sweet Hereafter; Welcome to Sarajevo; The Wings of the Dove.*

Art Greenwich Twin—Greenwich Ave. at 12th St. (505-CINE#616) *Anastasia; The Jackal.*

Cinema Village 12th St—22 E. 12th St. (924-3363) *Habit.*

Film Forum—209 W. Houston St. (727-8110) *Cremaster 5; Fast, Cheap & Out of Control; How I Spent My Summer Vacation.* Opening 12/3: *Office Killer.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Quad Cinema—34 W.13th St. (255-8800) *Bang; The Full Monty; Happy Together; Kiss or Kill; Sick.*

Screening Room—54 Varick St. (below Canal) (334-2100) *The House of Yes; Shall We Dance?* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village East—189 Second Ave., at 12th St. (529-6799) *Alien Resurrection; Boogie Nights; Flubber; Gattaca; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Little Mermaid; The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

Village Theatre VII—66 Third Ave., at 11th St. (982-0400) *L. A. Confidential; Bean; Eve's Bayou; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; One Night Stand; Starship Troopers.*

Waverly—323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (505-CINE#603) *The Rainmaker.*

14th-41st Streets

19th Street East—890 Broadway, at 19th St. (260-8000) *Boogie Nights; Devil's Advocate; Eve's Bayou; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; The Little Mermaid.*

34th Street Showplace—238 E. 34th St. (532-5544) *Alien Resurrection; Devil's Advocate; The Rainmaker; Red Corner; Starship Troopers.*

Chelsea—260 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#597) *L. A. Confidential; Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mad City; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Red Corner.*

Chelsea West—333 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#614) *Flubber; The Jackal.*

Murray Hill Cinemas—160 E. 34th St. (689-6548) *Anastasia; Boogie Nights; The Full Monty; The Ice Storm.*

42nd-60th Streets

59th Street East—239 E. 59th St. (505-CINE#615) *One Night Stand.*

Astor Plaza—44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (869-8340) *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation.*

Cinema I, II, Third Ave.—1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (753-6022) *Boogie Nights; The Ice Storm; The Little Mermaid.*

Coronet—993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (505-CINE#608) *Anastasia; The Jackal.*

Criterion Center—1514 Broadway, bet. 44th and 45th Sts. (354-0900) *Alien Resurrection; Bean; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mad City; The Man Who Knew Too Little; One Night Stand; Starship Troopers.*

Crown Gotham—969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (759-2262) *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation.*

Eastside Playhouse—919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (755-3020) *Mrs. Brown.*

Embassy 1—1560 Broadway, bet. 46th and 47th Sts. (302-0494) *The Full Monty.*

Embassy 2-4—701 Seventh Ave., bet. 47th and 48th Sts. (730-7262) *Boogie Nights; Gattaca; Tar; The Little Mermaid.*

Guild 50th Street—33 W. 50th St. (757-2406) *Flubber.*

National Theatre—1500 Broadway, bet. 43rd and 44th Sts. (505-CINE#589) *The Jackal; Red Corner.*

Paris Theatre—4 W. 58th St. (688-3800) *Washington Square.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

State—1540 Broadway (391-2900) *Devil's Advocate; Eve's Bayou; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker.*

Sutton—205 E. 57th St. (759-1411) *Flubber.*

Worldwide Cinemas—340 W. 50th St. (505-CINE#610) *Air Force One; The Edge; The Game; Men in Black; The Peacemaker; A Simple Wish.*

Ziegfeld—141 W. 54th St. (505-CINE#602) *Anastasia.*

61st Street and Above, East Side

72nd St. East—1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (879-1313) *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.*

86th Street—125 E. 86th St. (505-CINE#604) *Alien Resurrection; Bean; Eve's Bayou.*

86th Street East—210 E. 86th St. (249-1144) *Gattaca; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Little Mermaid.*

Beekman—1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (505-CINE#606) *The Wings of the Dove.*

First & 62nd St. Cinema—400 E. 62nd St. (505-CINE#957) *Alien Resurrection; The Full Monty; The Rainmaker.*

Gemini—1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (832-1670) *Devil's Advocate; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Starship Troopers.*

Opening

A Christmas Story

In Pier Paolo Pasolini's treatment of the tale of the three wise men—filmed last year by his student Sergio Citti—the moral stays the same while the journey turns surreal: The regal trio are now multicultural acrobats roped into playing parts in a live Nativity scene. 'I Magi Randagi' ('We Free Kings') premieres Friday, December 5, at MOMA, then plays for two weeks at Anthology Film Archives. See "Museums, Societies, Etc.," for more info.

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Revival

When Kate Met Larry

When screen legends Katharine Hepburn and Sir Laurence Olivier finally got around to making a film together, it was a TV movie called *Love Among the Ruins.* In the seldom-seen 1975 romance, they played aged ex-lovers reunited by chance (and by George Cukor, who directed). Showing through December at the Museum of Television & Radio. See "Museums, Societies, Etc.," for more info.

New York Twin—1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (744-7339) *L.A. Confidential; Bean.*

Orpheum 7—1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (876-2400) *Anastasia; Boogie Nights; Devil's Advocate; Flubber; The Jackal; Mad City; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Red Corner; Starship Troopers.*

UA East—1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (249-5100) *The Rainmaker.*

61st Street and Above, West Side

62nd and Broadway—1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (505-CINE#864) *The House of Yes.*

84th Street—2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (877-3600) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Devil's Advocate; The Jackal; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Red Corner; Starship Troopers.*

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas—30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (757-2280) *The Full Monty; The Ice Storm; Kiss or Kill; Shall We Dance?; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Lincoln Square—1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (336-5000) *L. A. Confidential; Bean; Bent; Boogie Nights; Eve's Bayou; Flubber; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; One Night Stand; The Rainmaker; Welcome to Sarajevo; The Wings of the Dove.* IMAX: *The Nutcracker; Across the Sea of Time; Flubber; L5—First City in Space; Four Million House Guests.*

Metro Cinema—2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (505-CINE#609) *Flubber; The Jackal.*

New Coliseum—701 W. 181st St. (740-1545) *In Search of the Dream; Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

Nova—3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (862-5728) *In Search of the Dream; Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

Olympia Theatre—2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (505-CINE#613) *Anastasia; The Rainmaker.*

Regency—1987 Broadway, bet. 67th and 68th Sts. (505-CINE#585) *The Tango Lesson.*

Bronx

Area Code 718

Bay Plaza—2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (320-3020) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; Devil's Advocate; Eve's Bayou; Flubber; I Know What You Did Last Summer; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Concourse Plaza—214 E. 161th St. (588-8800) *In Search of the Dream; Bean; Devil's Advocate; Eve's Bayou; I Know What You Did Last Summer; The Jackal; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Nueba Yol 3; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Whitestone—2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (409-9037) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; Devil's Advocate; Eve's Bayou; Flubber; I Know What You Did Last Summer; The Jackal; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Nueba Yol 3; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Brooklyn

Area Code 718

Alpine—6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (777-FILM#580) *Anastasia; Bean; Flubber; The Jackal; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker; The Little Mermaid.*

Canarsie—9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (251-0700) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation.*

Cobble Hill—265 Court St. (596-9113) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Eve's Bayou; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker; The Wings of the Dove.*

Fortway—6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (777-FILM#578) *Alien Resurrection; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Starship Troopers.*

Kenmore—Church Ave. nr. Flatbush Ave. (777-FILM#576) *Alien Resurrection; Eve's Bayou; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers.*

Kent Triplex—Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (338-3371) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

Kings Plaza—5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (777-FILM#579) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Eve's Bayou; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Kingsway—946 Kings Hwy. at Coney Island Ave. (777-FILM#577) *Bean; Flubber; I Know What You Did Last Summer; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker.*

Marboro—6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (232-4000) *Alien Resurrection; Devil's Advocate; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Starship Troopers.*

Pavilion Theatre—188 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn (369-0838) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Flubber; The Jackal; Kiss or Kill; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker.*

Ridgewood—55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (821-5993) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Flubber; The Jackal; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation.*

The Movies at Sheepshead Bay—3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (615-1700) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; Devil's Advocate; Flubber; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers.*

Queens

Area Code 718

Astoria—28-60 Steinway St. (726-1279) *Alien Resurrection; Devil's Advocate; The Jackal; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers.*

Bay Terrace—211-01 26th Ave. and Bell Blvd., Bayside (428-4040) *Bean; Devil's Advocate; Mad City; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Red Corner; The Little Mermaid.*

Centre Sunnyside—42-17 Queens Blvd. (361-6869) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Flubber; The Jackal; Mad City; Starship Troopers.*

Cinema City—183-15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (777-FILM#592) *Alien Resurrection; Eve's Bayou; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Cinemart—106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (261-2244) *Flubber; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; One Night Stand; The Rainmaker; The Little Mermaid.*

Continental—70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (544-1020) *Alien Resurrection; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.*

Crossbay—94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (848-1738) *Alien Resurrection; The Jackal.*

Crossbay II—92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (641-5330) *Anastasia; Eve's Bayou; Flubber; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Elmwood—57-02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (429-4770) *Eve's Bayou; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; The Little Mermaid.*

Forest Hills—107-16 Continental Ave., at Queens Blvd. (261-7866) *Anastasia; Bean.*

Fresh Meadows—Eastbound Service Road, at 190th St. (777-FILM#619) *Anastasia; Bean; Flubber; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker.*

Jackson Triplex—82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (478-6777) *Alien Resurrection; Flubber; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

Main Street Cinemas—72-66 Main St. (263-4828) *Alien Resurrection; Bean; Fairytale—A True Story; Flubber; Leave It to Beaver; The Little Mermaid; The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

Midway—108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (261-8572) *Closed for Renovations.*

Movieworld—242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (423-7200) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Flubber; The Jackal; The Man Who Knew Too Little; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers.*

North Shore Towers—27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (229-7702) *A Life Apart; Bean; The Edge; Mad City.*

Plaza —103-14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (639-0012) *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

Quartet—160-06 Northern Blvd., at 160th St., Flushing (359-6777) *Alien Resurrection; Bean; I Know What You Did Last Summer; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Little Mermaid.*

The Movies at Bayside—38-39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (225-7711) *Anastasia; The Jackal; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers.*

Trylon—98-81 Queens Blvd., at 66th Ave., Rego Park (459-8944) *The Wings of the Dove.*

Staten Island

Area Code 718

Atrium—680 Arthur Kill Road, nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (317-8300) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; Flubber; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Hylan Plaza—107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (351-0805) *Alien Resurrection; Flubber; The Jackal; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker.*

The Movies at Staten Island—141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (983-9600) *Alien Resurrection; Anastasia; Bean; Devil's Advocate; Flubber; The Jackal; Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil; Mortal Kombat: Annihilation; The Rainmaker; Starship Troopers; The Little Mermaid.*

Museums, Societies, Etc.

American Museum of the Moving Image— "Jack Smith and His Secret Flix." 12/6: *Normal Love* (1963) and *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943). 12/7: *Camp* (1965), *Chumlum* (1964), *The Secret of Rented Island* (1977), and *I Was a Male Yvonne DeCarlo* (1970). 36-01 35th Ave., Astoria, Queens (718-784-0077); $12-$15 nonmembers; $8-$10 members; $4 ages 5-18.

Anthology Film Archives—12/2: *Dear Maestro: A Documentary on Joze Plecnik.* 12/3: *Oscar Wilde* (1960) and *Murder and Murder* (1996). 12/5 and 12/7: "Kenneth Anger: Program One." Through 12/5: *Dead Heart* (1996) and *A Couch in New York* (1995). 12/6-12/7: *Boudu Saved From Drowning* (1932), *A Day in the Country* (1936), and *The Silences of the Palace* (1994). 12/6-12/19: *I Magi Randagi (We Free Kings)* (1995). 12/6 and 12/10:

Photograph courtesy of The Museum of Television & Radio.

"Kenneth Anger: Program Two." 12/7: *Old and New* (1930) and *Romance Sentimentale* (1930). 12/8–12/10 and 12/12: *Chappaqua* (1967). 12/9–12/10: *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951). 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110); $7.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Selections From the 1997 Gay and Lesbian Film Festival." 12/6: *You Don't Know Dick: The Courageous Hearts of Transsexual Men* and *Murder and Murder*. 12/7: *I Shall Not Be Removed*. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000, ext. 230); $6; $4 for members, students, and senior citizens.

Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival—11/28–12/14: Contemporary films from Ethiopia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Egypt, Senegal, and more are screened at Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363); Harlem Victoria V, 125th St. (222-8900); and Columbia University's Miller Theater, 116th St. and Broadway (854-7799). Tickets $8 to $15. Call 749-6020 for information.

Different Light—12/7: *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1984). 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850); free.

Donnell Media Center—"Meet the Maker: Yau Ching Presents Her Hong Kong documentaries." 12/4: *Diasporama (Part I): Dead Air* and *June 30, 1997 (AKA Celebrate What?)*. 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619); free.

Film Forum—"60s Vérité." 12/3: *Law and Order* (1969) and *The Chair* (1962). 12/4–12/6: *Don't Look Back* (1966) and *Monterey Pop* (1968). 12/7: *Jane* (1962) and *Susan Starr* (1962). 12/8: *Free At Last* (1968), *A Time for Burning* (1967), and *The Children Were Watching* (1960). "Columbia Before the Code." 12/2: *Child of Manhattan* (1932) and *Jealousy* (1934). 12/9: *The Night Club Lady* (1932) and *The Circus Queen Murder* (1933). 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110); $8.

Film Society of Lincoln Center (The Walter Reade Theater)—"The Celluloid Circus." 12/2: *Bye Bye Brazil* (1980) and *The Big Circus* (1959). 12/3–12/4: *Man on a Tightrope* (1953) and *La Strada* (1956). "Spanish Cinema Now!" 12/5–12/6: *Pajarico* (1997). 12/5 and 12/7: *La Buena Vida (The Good Life)* (1996). 12/6–12/7: *Familia (Family)* (1996). 12/9–12/10: *Asaltar Los Cielos (Storm the Skies)* (1996) and *La Celestina (The Matchmaker)* (1997). "Movies for Kids." 12/6–12/7: *International House* (1933). Call 875-5601 for info. 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600); $8.50.

French Institute—"From Paris to Hollywood: Originals vs. Remakes." 12/2: *Trois Hommes et un Couffin* (1985) and *Three Men and a Baby* (1987). 12/9: *Les Compères* (1983) and *Father's Day* (1997). Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160); $7, $10 double feature.

Japan Society—"Japanese Theatre on Film." 12/2: *The Lovers' Exile* (1980). 12/5: *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1969). 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015); $7.50.

Museum of Modern Art—"Premiere." 12/5: *I Magi Randagi (We Free Kings)* (1996). "New China." 12/5: *Out of Phoenixbridge* (1997). 12/6: *Bumming in Beijing* (1990) and *1966, My Time in the Red Guards (1993)*. 12/7: *I Graduated!* (1992) and various shorts. "Luchino Visconti." 12/5: *Lo straniero (The Stranger)* (1967) and *Ludwig II* (1972). 12/6: *Rocco e i Suoi Fratalli (Rocco and His Brothers)* (1960) and *Sandra* (1965). 12/7: *Il Gattopardo (The Leopard)* (1963) and *Conversation Piece* (1974). 12/8: *Le Notti Bianche (White Nights)* (1957) and *Giorni di Gloria (Days of Glory)* (1945). 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9400); free with $9.50 admission.

Museum of Television & Radio—"TV Movies." Month of December: *Love Among the Ruins* (1972). 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6600); $6.

Screening Room—Midnight showing: *Swingers* (1996) and *Pulp Fiction* (1995). Sunday brunch: *Casablanca* (1942) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). 54 Varick St., below Canal St. (334-2100); $8 ($5 for Sunday brunch patrons).

Symphony Space—"Truffaut: The Man Who Loved Film." 12/2 *Day for Night* (1973) and *8½* (1933). 2537 Broadway, at 96th St. (864-5400); $8, $5 members.

YWCA Cine-Club—"A Celebration of Japanese Cinema." 12/6–12/7: *Page of Madness (Kurutta Ippeiji)* (1926). 610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (735-9717); $5 members, $6 nonmembers.

Nik Cohn *continued from page 34*

el-chewing delivery of a boxing announcer bellowed out our names. MISS EEEVONNNA ELLLEEEMAAAN," he intoned, then glanced at me and hastily checked his name card. "Who are you?" he demanded.

"I wrote the story."

"Oh." For a moment the emcee looked blank. Then he regathered his forces. "MISS EEEVONNNA ELLEEEMAAN," he announced again. "And acquaintance."

The film itself made small impression on me. I could see that it was competently made, and John Travolta was superb, but it all seemed oddly hackneyed—a rehashed "problem teenagers" flick from the fifties, updated with four-letter words and gang bangs.

Afterward, making my way through the hysterical crush outside the theater, through the cops and the paparazzi and the screaming nymphettes, I felt more panic than elation. Fevermania, as it would soon be labeled, was something I'd never bargained for. It seemed like a rogue chemical reaction I had triggered by chance that was now running off with me.

Dimly, I already sensed that this would change everything. From here on, I was going to be stuck with another self—a virtual stranger, defined by *Fever*, who'd hog the limelight and try to take me over. I didn't think we'd get along.

Returning to New York, I plunged back into work—specifically, into another story for *New York*. This time around, again with Tu Sweet's assistance, I was going to spend 24 hours on 42nd Street. I planned to dive in blind, without preconceptions. If a story came up, I'd grab it. And if it didn't, no matter, I'd make one up.

That was the idea, anyway. But something odd happened. When I reached the Deuce, people talked to me. Perhaps, having nothing to lose, they couldn't be bothered to put up defenses; or perhaps I'd learned something about listening. Either way, I was able to make the kind of connections that had defeated me in Bay Ridge.

First there was a dealer selling lactose as cocaine, then a drugstore cowboy selling sex, then a street preacher called Sister Pearl. Almost without my prompting, they poured out their stories. And what they told me was so vastly more interesting, so much wilder and weirder and more heartbreaking than anything I might have invented, that I could do nothing but shut up and marvel.

True stories proved highly addictive. Once I'd consumed this first batch, I had to have another, and another. The habit grew so compulsive that it quickly blocked out all other concerns. As a result, I missed the full force of Fevermania.

I did notice that a surprising number of people had taken to hugging me and calling me Nickie, and that I was now referred to in the tabloids as Fever Man Cohn. I also noticed that large checks had started rolling in. This was gratifying, but also troubling. I was painfully aware that everything *Fever* brought me was shabbily come by. That knowledge, more and more, came to eat me up. But I failed to return the checks even so.

Not that I mattered now, in any case. *Fever* had taken on a life of its own. 2001 Odyssey, and "Staying Alive," and Travolta's white suit, above all, with the tight vest and billowing flared trousers, and his right hand pointing to the stars—these had entered pop mythology, embedding themselves in the collective memory, until they came, for many, to define a whole decade.

Even ten or fifteen years afterward, whenever the seventies were evoked, it was a safe bet that someone would strike a disco pose and morph, Bee Gees–style, into a singing mouse. And now, of course, the whole seventies machinery has cranked up again. The seventies are sexy, in fashion, in rock, in films like *Boogie Nights*.

Most of this strikes me as nothing more profound than fashionable hype. Each decade goes through a similar process of regurgitation, and it always boils down to the same core: a shiny new phrase for money.

What is genuine, however, is the staying power of *Saturday Night Fever* itself—or rather the power of its mystique. This doesn't stem, Lord knows, from my story. Nor, to judge from the brief snatches that sometimes flash past me on TV, has the film lasted well. But the central figure, whether he's called Vincent or Tony Manero, still resonates. Much of that is because of Travolta, of course. Nonetheless, I keep returning to that first night outside 2001 Odyssey, and the figure in the doorway, standing under the neon light. The grace in him, and the hunger. All that passion, and no place to let it loose but here, in this nowhere club, on this nothing dance floor, where no one would ever know. Or would they?

That figure never fades. He was in Derry, and in London, and again in Bay Ridge. And he's still out there, somewhere or other, in his own neighborhood, caught in his own set of traps. Just staying alive.

We were halfway along the BQE when the car phone rang, and a publicist told us the party had been rained out. 2001 Odyssey wasn't fated to have its own version of Woodstock II, after all. Not this week, anyway. "Too bad," my driver said as he turned the car around. He'd been curious to check the place out. "How much time did you spend there yourself?" he asked.

"One hour," I said. "And twenty years."

theater

Cherry Jones...Foreman...Drama Dept.

Broadway

Previews and Openings

The Capeman—Paul Simon's painstakingly crafted, painfully realized, and vigorously ballyhooed new musical finally arrives, with reports of extraordinary budgets and hubris bobbing in its wake. The score—a cross-fertilization of salsa, rock, doo-wop, and gospel tunes—features more than thirty songs; the story is based on one of the most sensational double murders in New York history, following Salvador Agron, the perp, for more than thirty years of his uncommon life. Book by Nobel Prize–winning poet Derek Walcott, direction and choreography by Mark Morris, and star turns by Ruben Blades and Marc Anthony. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 1/8 opening. *Marquis Theater, 211 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman, the electrifying teen cutie from *Beautiful Girls,* stars in this newly adapted version of the 1955 play. Also starring Linda Lavin, Harris Yulin, George Hearn, and Austin Pendleton. $40–$60. Tues. at 8, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Fri. and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/4 opening. *Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Sunshine Boys—The last time Jack Klugman and Tony Randall appeared on stage together—in the National Actors Theatre's *Three Men on a Horse*—they were scolded by critics for not choosing a more age-appropriate play. Now, as a pair of retired vaudevillians in one of Neil Simon's most cherished comedies, they have a chance to make amends. $20–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/8 opening. *Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

A View From the Bridge—Anthony LaPaglia, last seen in *The Rose Tattoo,* stars in Arthur Miller's affecting drama about the passion of betrayal. Directed by Michael Mayer. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30; Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 12/14 opening. *Roundabout Theatre's Stage Right, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (869-8400).*

Now Playing

Beauty and the Beast—A musical based on a movie based on a fairy tale. Setting box-office and, presumably, merchandising records even as we speak. Deborah Gibson plays the girl; Chuck Wagner plays the (hairy) boy. Lyrics by Tim Rice and the late Howard Ashman; score by Alan Menken. $22.50–$70. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 4/18/94. *Palace Theatre, 1564 Broadway, at 47th St. (307-4100).*

Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk—George C. Wolfe and Savion Glover's Tony-winning meditation on the pre-Hollywood ethnic roots of tap dancing. $20–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs.*

Cats—Now and for the foreseeable future. By Andrew Lloyd Webber, of course, with an assist from T. S. Eliot. $37.50–$65. Mon. and Tues. at 8, Wed. at 2 and 8, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/7/82. *Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (239-6200).*

Chicago—It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of *Chicago* to Broadway, but since *Chicago* is about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Especially when, as here, it pays off. Bebe Neuwirth does a scissors kick or two while maintaining her come-hither brand of snootiness; James Naughton doles out dearly bought legal strategy like alms to an importunate beggar. If Chicago in the twenties was like this, it was more fun than Periclean Athens. Also starring Marilu Henner and Joel Grey. (Simon: 12/2/96). $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/14/96. *Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

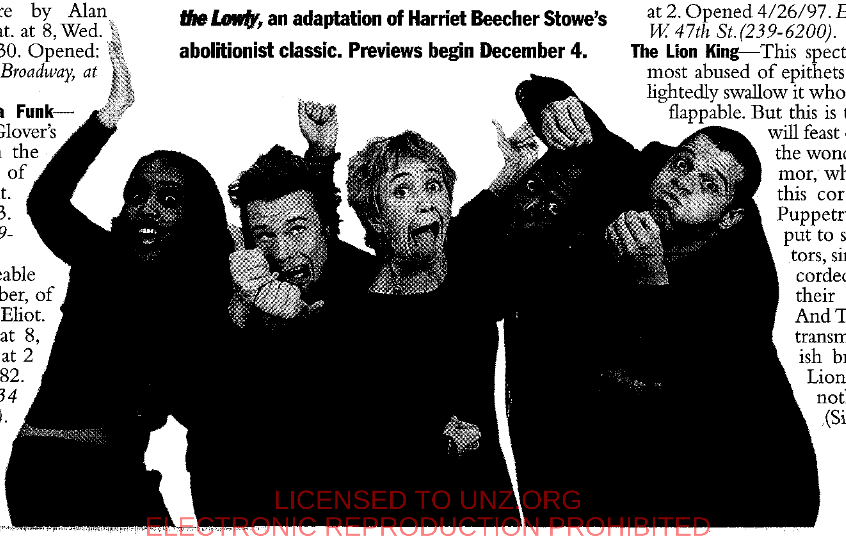
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—A new revival of the 1962 musical, featuring Bob Amaral as Pseudolus. $60–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 20 mins.*

Grease!—A crowd-pleasing, neon-heavy rock-and-roll musical about a group of high-school seniors in 1959. Book, music, and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey; directed and choreographed by Jeff Calhoun. Linda Blair plays Betty Rizzo. $30–$67.50. Mon., Tues., Thurs., and Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 1 and 6. Opened: 5/11/94. *Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 W. 49th St. (239-6200).*

Ivanov—With Kevin Kline and the rest going for it, this Chekhov drama is a winner: wasted lives have seldom been caught so completely and compellingly and, yes, pulsatingly. Kline's performance is microscopic enough to reveal undreamt-of details to the naked eye and ear, telescopic enough to bring the farthest generalities into close focus. Most of the large cast is on target. David Hare's adaptation could not be more vividly actable, with not an awkward moment anywhere. That painterly and musical director Gerald Gutierrez has orchestrated both visually and aurally, finding ingenious compositions for both our sight and hearing. (Simon: 12/1/97). $40–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/20/97. *Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

Previews
Cabin Fever

The Drama Dept., the group responsible for the deliciously gratifying *As Bees in Honey Drown,* begins its season with *Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life Among the Lowly,* an adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's abolitionist classic. Previews begin December 4.



Photograph by Joan Marcus.

Jackie: An American Life—As ominously titled as it is, this isn't a serious play. It isn't even a straight biography, though Gip Hoppe, the author, manages to cram in historical events both great and small. Instead, it relies on whimsical devices to convey some ideas about the nature of the First Lady's celebrity (the Rat Pack? LBJ? Joe Kennedy?—all puppets) and revels in portraits of the mundane. Margaret Colin stars. $45–$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/10/97. *Belasco Theater, 111 W. 44th St. (239-6200).*

Jekyll & Hyde—Man turns into beastly man, all in the name of science. Book and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, score by Frank Wildhorn. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/28/97. *Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St.(239-6200).*

The King and I—The Rodgers and Hammerstein renaissance continues apace with their famous musical adaptation of the memoir *Anna and the King of Siam,* featuring Kevin Gray, a former phantom from *Phantom,* in the role created by Yul Brynner. Faith Prince stars as Anna. $25–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.*

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—This romantic comedy, set in 1939 Atlanta on the eve of the premiere of *Gone With the Wind,* is Alfred Uhry's first effort since *Driving Miss Daisy.* The wait clearly paid off; he won the 1997 Tony award for Best Play. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 2/27/97. *Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (307-4100).*

Les Misérables—The implacable Inspector Javert hounding the innocent ex-convict Jean Valjean; the pathetic Fantine, wronged by the entire world, dying as she entrusts her daughter, Cosette, to the now-prosperous Mayor Valjean; the dastardly Thénardiers bringing up Cosette as a scullion while cosseting their own daughter, Eponine—what a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97). $15–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 3 hrs. 15 mins.*

The Life—A contemporary street opera set in eighties Times Square. Lillias White and Chuck Cooper just picked up Tony awards for their performances. Music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Ira Gasman; book by Coleman, Gasman, and David Newman. $40–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 4/26/97. *Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St.(239-6200).*

The Lion King—This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical.* Kiddies will delightedly swallow it whole, unless they are tiny and flappable. But this is the one such show adults will feast on, too, mostly because of the wonders wrought by Julie Taymor, who designed and directed this cornucopia of dazzlements. Puppetry from East and West is put to superlative use, yet the actors, singers, and dancers are accorded enough humanity to ply their anthropomorphic skills. And Taymor has found ways to transmute the strictly cartoonish bravura of the big-screen Lion King onto a stage so that nothing is lost in translation. (Simon: 12/1/97). $20–$80.

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where half-price tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened 11/13/97. *New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Miss Saigon—This reworking of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, set in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, will next week become one of Broadway's ten longest-running musicals. Score by Claude-Michel Schonberg; lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr.; directed by Nicholas Hytner. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/11/91. *Broadway Theater, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

The Old Neighborhood—Three interconnected one-act plays by David Mamet, starring Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis. $45–$55. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 11/19/97. *Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Phantom of the Opera—Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in, recently edging into sixth place among the longest-running musicals. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Proposals—It wouldn't be a new Broadway season without a Neil Simon comedy. This one varies from its predecessors, however, in that (a) it's set outdoors, (b) young people make up over half the *dramatis personae*, and (c) Joe Mantello, who is not Gene Saks, directs. $35–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/6/97. *Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St. (239-6200)*

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary young and hip types living in the East Village. $30–$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.*

The Scarlet Pimpernel—You've seen the billboard. Now come see the show. It's got romance, suspense, swashbuckling, and a whole bunch of eighteenth-century stuff; if it succeeds, Broadway could well be on its way to becoming a French Revolution theme park. Pop composer Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde*) did the score. Nan Knighton adapted Baroness Orczy's novel for the stage. Christine Andreas, Terrence Mann, and Douglas Sills star. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/9/97. *Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

1776—The book of this 1969 musical, the gifted Peter Stone's masterpiece, is surely one of the best ever. Thrillingly incorporating the potentially divisive issue of slavery, it succeeds in keeping us, despite our knowledge of the outcome, in a state of wonderfully paradoxical suspense. Splendid as was Peter Hunt's original production, this Scott Ellis revival very nearly matches it. It will provide you not only with three hours of choice theatergoing, but with three very rich hours of life. Music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards. (Simon: 8/25/97). $20–$75. Wed.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2; Sun. at 1 and 6:30. *Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (307-4100).*

Side Show—The story of the English-born Siamese twins Daisy and Violet Hilton, who during the twenties and thirties went from a freak show to vaudeville fame, has many tragic elements, and this new Broadway musical tries to tackle them. But musical comedy perforce has problems with tragedy, and this show is no exception. Yet when you tally up its credits and debits, you end up, if not exactly in the black, at least in a becoming Oxford gray. There are enough good songs by Henry Krieger to make the weak ones overlookable. Alice Ripley (Violet) and Emily Skinner (Daisy) act, sing, and dance compellingly. (Simon: 10/27/97). $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 10/16/97. *Richard Rodgers Theater, 226 W. 46th. St. (307-4100).*

Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—They say the neon lights are bright on Broadway, and when this show—drawn from the score Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller composed to accompany the American baby-boomer childhood experience—breezes into New York City, people gonna scrape and bow. A tip, tip, tip, young blood: Buy yourself a ticket, sit down in the very first row. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. $65–$75. *At the Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (239-6200)?* Uh-huh. *2 hrs. 10 mins.*

Street Corner Symphony—The seventies, a decade that increasingly seems better suited to art than to life, comes roaring back in this revue of soul, pop, and disco ditties. *Get down.* Conceived and staged by Marion J. Caffey. $47.50–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/24/97. *Brooks Atkinson Theatre, 256 W. 47th St. (307-4100).*

Titanic—What it lacks in suspense it makes up for in Tony awards (five, in 1997, including Best Musical). Music and Lyrics by Maury Yeston; book by Peter Stone. Directed by Richard Jones. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/23/97. *Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (307-4100).*

Triumph of Love—It's the Broadway musical-theater debut for F. Murray Abraham, an eagerly awaited return for *Sunset* diva Betty Buckley, and an excuse for Susan Egan, the especially belle Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*, to bend gender. The story, adapted from the eighteenth-century romantic comedy by Pierre Marivaux, twists and turns with each costume change. Directed by Michael Mayer, adapted for the stage by James Magruder, music by Jeffrey Stock, and lyrics by Susan Birkenhead. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 10/23/97. *Royale Theater, 242 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Bashevis—Tales of I. B. Singer—A play based on the short stories of the Nobel Prize–winning author. Starring David Marguiles. $20. Tues. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 12/9 opening. *Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).*

Brides of the Moon—A sci-fi spoof about four female astronauts and a monkey. Written and performed by the Five Lesbian Brothers. $28. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3. Opens 12/2. *New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (460-5475).*

Clue: The Musical—Colonel Mustard, Professor Plum, Miss Scarlet, et al. sing their way through the board-game whodunnit. Book and direction by Peter DePietro; lyrics by Tom Chiodo; music by Galen Blum, Wayne Barker, and Vinnie Martucci. $40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 12/3 opening. *Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. (239-6200).*

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella, who has always had a nose for a star-turning truffle, now gets to show it off in this 100th-anniversary production

Opening Veterans' Week

Both are pioneers, MacArthur award winners, and, in the most respectful sense of the oxymoron, dependable figures of the downtown avant-garde. Both draw heavily from the detritus and absurd stammerings of the unconscious. And now, happily, both Richard Foreman and John Jesurun are opening new shows within two days of each other: the former with *Pearls for Pigs*, which begins performances today, and the latter with *Jump Cut (Faust)*, which starts its three-week run this Wednesday. Foreman swears the name of his show isn't deliberately hostile—even if it is his first in 30 years to have toured the United States before landing amid the more sophisticated, less swinish audiences of New York. "I would have named it *Pearls for Pigs* anyway," he insists, though he charmingly confesses, "I think it might be more accessible than my other plays, so I wonder if I'm selling out." The piece, a cheekily self-referential meditation on the limitations of the stage, is Foreman's first attempt to challenge his own medium so explicitly. But the theater has always frustrated him. "I feel trapped by it," he says, "because it's an art that demands an immediate response from the audience. I've always asked myself why I don't go off and paint." In *Faust*, a modern and entertaining rewrite of Goethe's drama, Jesurun also prowls some new terrain. "I don't usually deal with classical interpretations," he says. "I was actually dreading it. I read it in school, and it was so heavy, so turgid." Indeed, Jesurun's style is anything but: He writes in lyrical, unmediated bursts, as if the images had washed up directly from his dreams. So how did he find a way into the material? What made it accessible to him? Jesurun chuckles. "To quote the song," he says, "I have some sympathy for the devil. My play is much more about the devil than it is about Faust." JENNIFER SENIOR

See listings for more information about* Pearls for Pigs; *for* Jump Cut (Faust), *call Thread Waxing Space at 966-9520.

is nothing less than electrifying! You can hear the roars of show-stopping applause a block away!"
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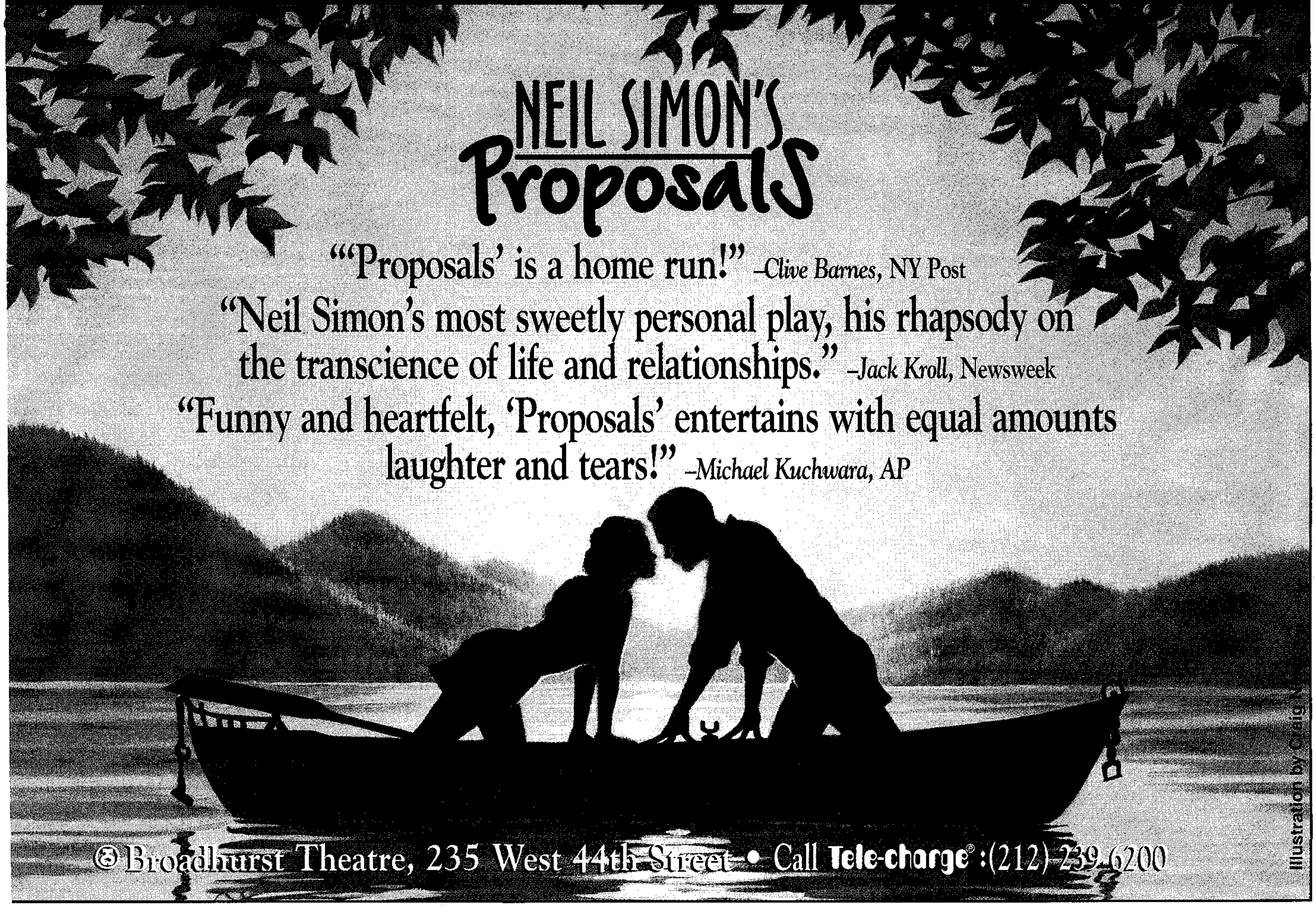

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Illustration by Craig

of Edmond Rostand's classic. In addition to playing the title character, Langella directs and provides the adaptation. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 12/9 opening. *Roundabout's Laura Pels Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

Goose-Pimples—The New Group inaugurates its fall season with this searing comedy by Mike Leigh, writer and director of the films *Naked, Secrets and Lies,* and *Career Girls.* Scott Elliott directs. $25–$30. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. In previews for a 12/18 opening. *Judith Anderson Theatre, 422 W. 42nd St. (279-4200).*

Mud, River, Stone—Two African-Americans, struggling to find their spiritual roots, instead find themselves stranded in a remote, and politically volatile, East African village. Written by Lynn Nottage, who drew her inspiration from a 1994 story in the New York *Times.* $37.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/14 opening. *Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. (279-4200).*

Pearls for Pigs—Perhaps the most accessible work to date from the venerable Richard Foreman. This time, the writer and director probes the limitations of his own medium—the theater—through a bunch of amusing Thespian archetypes and an actor called The Maestro, who feels his sanity under siege whenever he climbs on stage. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8. $30. *Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. (279-4200).*

Pride's Crossing—A rich, densely populated memory play from Tina Howe about the 90-year-old (and imaginary) Mabel Tidings Bigelow, world-record holder for swimming the English Channel. $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. In previews for a 12/7 opening. *Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life Among the Lowly—The Drama Dept., the group responsible for the deliciously gratifying *As Bees in Honey Drown,* begins its season with an adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's abolitionist masterpiece. Directed by Randolph Curtis Rand; adapted by Rand and Floraine Kay. $12. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 12/4 for a 12/11 opening. *Greenwich House Theatre, 27 Barrow St. (541-8441).*

Opening A Splash

Cherry Jones—whose gleaming, ever-evolving stage presence makes her a star in an almost literal sense—puts her versatility to stunning use in 'Pride's Crossing,' Tina Howe's richly populated memory play about the fictional character Mabel Tidings Bigelow, world-record holder for swimming the English Channel. Opens December 7.

Photograph by Ken Howard.

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach, who made his Broadway debut more than a half-century ago, stars in this new comedy about a relationship between a young man and an older Jewish widower. $35–$45. Written by Jeff Baron; directed by Lonny Price. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/15 opening. *Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (505-0700).*

Now Playing

Alligator Tales—Unlike other solo performers, Anne Galjour does not hump the same, obsessive autobiographical note. Instead, she plucks vivid sense memories from her bayou childhood—dredging for oysters, facing down hurricanes, fleeing from alligators—and brings them to life through eight imaginary, interconnected characters. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 12/7. *Manhattan Theatre Club's Stage II at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Always . . . Patsy Cline—This musical had a hard time weathering the transplant from Nashville to New York, but it does have its selling points, including a six-piece orchestra, a twenty-song score, and a curious premise: Cline's actual two-year correspondence with an adoring Texas housewife. Tori Lynn Palazola stars. $40–$45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 2 and 5. Closes 12/7. *Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (239-6200).*

As Bees in Honey Drown—Socialite Alexa Vere de Vere—one part Hepburn, two parts eyeliner, three parts luxury addict—enlists a young author to write a screenplay about her life. Written by Douglas Carter Beane; alertly directed by Drama Desk Award winner Mark Brokaw. Starring Bo Foxworth and J. Smith-Cameron. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 7/24/97. *Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (239-6200).*

Ballad of Yachiyo—Against the backdrop of pre–World War I Hawaii, a love triangle develops between a young naïf, an artist, and a woman who needs them both. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2 and 7. Through 12/7. *Public Theater's Martinson Hall, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200).*

Blue Man Group: Tubes—Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Kids love it, and adults can pretend the show's an ironic commentary on performance art. $39–$49. Tues., Wed., Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. *Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (254-4370).*

The Broadway Kids Sing Broadway—A musical revue of songs made famous by Broadway kids. Expect tunes from *Annie, The Sound of Music, The Wizard of Oz, Oliver,* and *Bye Bye Birdie.* $20. Sat. and Sun. at noon. *John Houseman Theater, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).*

A Christmas Carol—Hal Linden and Roddy McDowall take turns playing the miserly misanthrope. $25–$65. Wed at 11, 2:30 and 7:30, Thurs. at 11 and 7:30, Fri. at 11, 5, and 8, Sat. at 11, 2, 5, and 8, Sun. at 11, 2 and 5. *Theater at Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. and 32nd St. (307-4111).*

Cotton Patch Gospel—Harry Chapin's musical retelling of the Greatest Story Ever Told. Presented by the Melting Pot Theatre Company. $25. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 2 and 7:30, Sun. at 1 and 5. Through 12/7. *Theater at Riverside Church, 120th St. and Riverside Dr. (279-4200).*

Defying Gravity—*Titanic* loathers, take heart. Although this is a play about the space-shuttle-*Challenger* disaster, it comes from the reliably twisted imagination of Jane Anderson, author of *The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader Murdering Mom.* Starring Lois Smith. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

A Dybbuk—That grand old chestnut, S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk,* for all its authentic shtetl atmosphere and throbbing tale of thwarted love and demonic possession, has always struck me as a bit of a bore. But in this translation by Joachim Neugroschel savvily adapted by Tony Kushner, it all comes funnily, furiously, crotchetily alive. This *Dybbuk* throws the book at us as it straddles, besides the two worlds of the living and the dead, the musty past and the frisky present. (Simon: 12/1/97). $40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. Through 12/7. *Joseph Papp Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200).*

Fantasticks—The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. *Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (674-3838).*

Filumena—Maria Tucci, last seen as the wonderful Ruth Steiner in *Collected Stories,* stars in this version of Eduardo DeFilippo's 1946 romantic comedy, which she translated herself. Presented by the Blue Light Theater Company. $37.50. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Mon at 8. Through 12/7. *Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. (239-6200).*

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof poking fun at the assorted absurdities of the Great White Way couldn't arrive in town at a more—well, propitious time. $40–$45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8:15, Sat. at 2:30 and 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30; food and drink available. *Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (239-6200).*

Godspell—The first all-black production of Stephen Schwartz's 1971 rock opera. $25. Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 3 and 7:30, Sun. at 3. Opened 2/6. *Victoria Theatre, 235 W. 125th St. (769-8183).*

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—An audience-participation comedy akin to *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding,* written by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack. When Grandma Sylvia dies, a power struggle ensues among family members. $37.50–$57.50, which includes a mitzvah meal. Opened: 10/9/94. Wed. at 2 and 7:30, Thurs. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 1 and 5. *Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (691-1555).*

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde—From letters, biographies, and court transcripts, writer-director Moisés Kaufman has put together an absorbing show about Oscar Wilde's 1895 trial for "gross indecency with male persons." $20–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. *Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane (307-4100).*

How I Learned to Drive—Paula Vogel's play benefits from an original slant: child molestation as an act of consenting partners, with the child as a willing participant. Miss Vogel has written a memory play about a pedophile and his big-breasted niece by marriage, Uncle Peck and Li'l Bit, names a trifle too apt to ring true. The driving lessons Uncle Peck gives Li'l Bit over the years are a slow, careful—even caring—seduction. Mark Brokaw has directed inventively. (Simon: 3/31/97). Now starring Molly Ringwald and Bruce Davison. $25–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 3/16/97. *Century Theater, 111 E. 15 St. (239-6200).*

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—An irrepressible, technicolor celebration of puns, fabric, and gay life. $45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 2 and 5. *Douglas Fairbanks Theater, 432 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love—has bravely decided to buck the trend. $45. Mon. and Tues at 8, Wed. at 2:30 and 8, Fri at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—Sandra Bernhard, who, by turns, waxes vulnerable and outrageous in her one-woman shows, returns to Off Broadway for the first time in nearly a decade. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 9. Through 12/31. *Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. (307-7171).*

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—After a sold-out run at the Irish Rep., Frank McCourt's irreverent, lovingly told Gaelic history moves across the street for another seven weeks. $30. Tues.–Sat. at 8:15, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 1/4. *Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. (727-2737).*

The Last Session—A musical about a songwriter with AIDS. Score and lyrics by Steve Schalchlin, upon whose life the musical is partially based. Book and direction by his partner, Jim Brochu. $25–$30. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8; Wed. at 2:30 and 8; Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened 10/17/97. *47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. (239-6200).*

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school-teaching nun backed by a magisterium of unassailable moral authority and some mean wrist action with a ruler. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 5. *St. Luke's Church Annex, 308 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

A Madhouse in Goa—Sex and political intrigue in the Greek Islands. By Martin Sherman, author of *Bent*; starring two-time Tony winner Judith Ivey. $40. Tues., Thurs., Fri., and Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sun. at 7; Sat. and Sun. at 2. Through 12/7. *Second Stage Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (787-3392).*

Major Barbara—Perhaps the most electrifying showcase for George Bernard Shaw's considerable debating talents, this play, written in 1905, explores some of the author's favorite themes by pitting the rich against the poor, the idealist against the pragmatist, and the young against the old. $30. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. and 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (727-2737).*

Mere Mortals—David Ives presents six one-acts, ranging from Mamet to mini-golf to mayfly mating rituals. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/29. *John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

Mindgames—Marc Salem, a mentalist and former director of research for *Sesame Street*, does a slew of fancy math tricks, stops his own pulse, and predicts the contents of people's wallets. $40. Tues. at 8; Wed. at 2:30 and 8; Fri. at 8; Sat. at 2, 6, and 9; Sun. at 3. Opened 11/17/97. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

Mojo—Jez Butterworth's Olivier Award–winning comedy, soon to be a film, about five toughs who try to launch their careers in London's fledgling rock and roll scene. Watch for shades of Tarantino, not just in the gritty, paranoid dialogue but the cheerfully violent plot. $32. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 7. Through 12/7. *Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. (239-6200).*

The Mother—Brecht's tale of a Russian widow's transformation from gentle matriarch to vigorous revolutionary. Presented by the Irondale Ensemble Project; directed by Jim Neisen. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 8. Through 12/20. *Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., bet. 9th and 10th Sts. (633-1292).*

Never the Sinner—American Jewish Theatre presents the sensational story of Leopold and Loeb—two wealthy, well-educated teenagers who in 1924 murdered a young boy on a whim. $32–$35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. (633-9797).*

Perfect Crime—Warren Manzi's long-running thriller about a wealthy psychiatrist accused of murdering her husband, and the small-town detective who tries to prove she committed the "perfect crime." $35. Mon. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/5/87. *Duffy Theatre, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. (695-3401).*

Radio City Christmas Spectacular—Live animals, Rockettes, mistletoe. $25–$57. Tues.–Fri. at 2:30 and 7:30, Sat. at 10, 1, 3:30, 6:30, and 9, and Sun. at 10, 1, 4, 7:30. *Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Sixth Ave., bet. 50th and 51st. (307-1000).*

Revenge in the Mob—The inevitable offspring of interactive comedies *Grandma Sylvia's Funeral* and *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*. A four-course meal is included, so we'll assume the carnage isn't too graphic. $60. Fri. and Sat. at 8. *Arno Ristorante, 141 W. 38th St. (1-888-MOB-BOYS).*

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A musical comedy revue that lampoons the camera-toting and madras-wearing. Directed by Patrick Quinn. $40; optional dinner one hour before curtain. Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7:30 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened 10/30/97. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (362-2590).*

Photograph by Gerry Goodstein.

Onstage
Once on This Island

Jean Cocteau Repertory presents *The Cure at Troy*, a contemporary adaptation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* by Nobel Prize–winning poet Seamus Heaney. Critics of the Irish bard may be disappointed that he doesn't use the occasion to finally wax political, but the script still resonates with themes of utmost importance to Northern Ireland, and it represents, to date, the poet's only foray into playwriting. Runs through February 12; call 677-0060 for show times and more information.

Stomp—As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show in which a troupe of performers dances, claps, and generally bangs on everything in sight. $29.50–$45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., bet. 7th and 8th Sts. (477-2477).*

Tell-Tale—It's part Poe, part *Paris Is Burning*, and all drag. Theatre Couture's summer sensation, starring the begowned Sherry Vine and the befrocked Jackie Beat, has moved, in modified form, to the West Village for an open-ended run. $27.50–$32.50. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 10/15/97. *Cherry Lane Theater, 38 Commerce St. (239-6200).*

10 Naked Men—See title. Written and directed by Ronnie Larsen, the author of *Making Porn*, which just closed after more than 500 performances. $30–$35. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. Opened 10/16/97. *Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. (239-6200).*

Three Days of Rain—Richard Greenberg, who specializes in contemporary drawing-room comedies, paints in a slightly darker hue this time around. There's still humor here, and romance, too, but at the heart of this drama lie two estranged siblings who discover a private journal kept by their father. $47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2:30. Through 12/28. *Manhattan Theatre Club's Stage I at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding—A wedding at *St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St.*, then a reception at *Vinnie's, 147 Waverly Pl.*, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $65–$75. Tues.–Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88. *(239-6200).*

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt, a pair of talented pianists who never made it to the recital halls, wax philosophical about pushy parents, arrogant students, and smug concert judges. $40–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Opened 10/30/97. *Promenade Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (239-6200).*

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Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Franz Kline—A survey of the Abstract Expressionist's works, from his earliest sketchbooks to his final painting; through 1/17. Stone, 113 E. 90th St. (988-6870).

Mark Leithauser—Etchings, silver-point drawings, and paintings of whimsical still-life compositions; through 1/10. Taggart, 48 E. 73rd St. (628-4000).

Sol LeWitt—Early working drawings, finished drawings, photographs, and structures ranging from *Objectivity,* a painted canvas wall structure from 1962, to a plotted and cut photograph of an aerial view of Manhattan from 1979, as well as a four-part, serial wall drawing from 1969 executed in color for the first time; through 1/3. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (794-4444).

Henri Matisse—A selection of drawings, etchings, lithographs, linocuts, and aquatints; through 1/10. Horan, 35 E. 67th St. (517-9410).

Cy Twombly—Cast-bronze sculptures; through 12/20. Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave. (744-2313).

57th Street Area

Gregory Barsamian—Sculpted objects that are synchronized to strobe lights to create the illusion of motion and metamorphosis; through 12/23. Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. (888-1122).

Thomas Cordell/Susan Shatter—Paintings of landscapes and city panoramas/Monotypes depicting close-up views of the Maine coastline. Through 12/20. Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (759-2345).

Vincent Desiderio—Recent paintings depicting narrative, fictional reconstructions of personal and public events; through 1/3. Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (541-4900).

Burgoyne Diller—Sculptures, wall reliefs, and drawings for three-dimensional works spanning 1930 to 1965; through 1/17. Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. (247-0082).

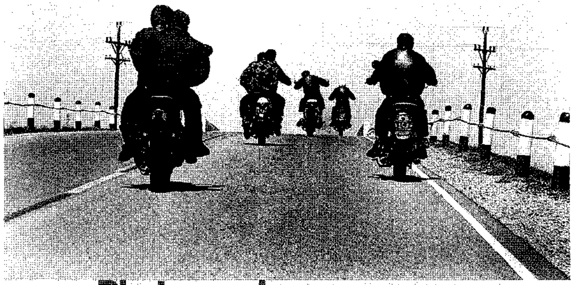
Guillermo Kuitca/Javier Marin—Paintings from 1989 and 1994/Sculptures of life-size figures in bronze and terra-cotta. Through 12/23. Haime, 41 E. 57th St. (888-3550).

Ana Mendieta—Early photographs and video segments that point to the artist's later direction, among them a a group of self-portraits, "Facial Cosmetic Variations," in which she disguised and altered her appearance using wigs, cosmetics, and prosthetic devices; through 12/20. Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (315-0470).

Man Ray—A survey focusing on the artist's unique contributions to Surrealism, including paintings, drawings, photographs, and objects, many of which have not been exhibited since they were made in the thirties and forties; through 12/20. Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (752-0124).

Egon Schiele—Drawings, watercolors, and prints on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Carnegie Museum of Art, and from private collectors in Europe and the United States; through 1/3. St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (245-6734).

Trevor Winkfield/Stuart Shills—Recent paintings that depict stylized figures in fantastic interiors/Landscape paintings produced during the Philadelphia artist's annual stay in Ballycastle, Ireland; 12/4–1/5. De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. (262-5050).



Photography On the Road

Back in 1962, Danny Lyon, a New York City native, joined a Midwest outlaw motorcycle club and spent four years shooting the pictures that paved the way for "new journalism" and 'Easy Rider.' Thirty-five years later, the first exhibition of the complete vintage prints of "The Bikeriders" demonstrates the photographer's immeasurable influence on fashion, advertising, and film. At Edwynn Houk Gallery, 745 Fifth Avenue, near 57th Street; through January 17.

SoHo and TriBeCa

Walter Anderson/Charles Burchfield—An exhibit pairing the watercolors of these two American artists, both of whom replicated the patterning in nature and achieved a balance of abstraction and objective imagery; through 1/3. Ross, 568 Broadway (343-2161).

Rachel Berwick/John Divola—An installation featuring an aviary inhabited by two Amazon parrots that have been trained to speak an extinct Carib-Indian language using documentation of that tribe by the eighteenth-century naturalist-explorer Alexander Von Humboldt/An installation of set stills between 1931 and 1934 that depict motion-picture sets; 12/3–1/17. Wooster Gardens, 39 Wooster St. (941-6210).

Ground Rules:

Galleries are generally open Mon. through Fri. from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

Tom Butter—Large, freestanding kinetic sculptures in metal and resin; through 12/20. Marcus, 578 Broadway (226-3200).

Bryan Crockett—Sculptures made from inflated latex balloons, some of which are embalmed with an epoxy resin, and a video installation; through 1/3. Fotouhi Cramer, 560 Broadway (431-1304).

Graham Durward—Paintings that satirize the levels of meaning available through contemporary forms of representation; through 12/20. Boesky, 51 Greene St. (941-9888).

Sylvie Fleury—Sculptures, wall paintings, photographs, and video that explore the intersection of the masculine and feminine in popular culture through beauty products and cars; through 12/20. Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (941-5711).

Howard Fried—An early film, *Inside the Harlequin* (1971), and early photo works; through 1/3. Apex, 291 Church St. (431-5270).

Ian Hornak/Valerie von Betzen—New still-life paintings/Paintings of American towns. Through 12/27. Perlow, 560 Broadway (941-1220).

Beatriz Milhazes—New paintings that continue the artist's interest in constructing combinations of familiar elements such as medallions, rosettes, lace, flowers, and necklaces; through 1/10. Thorp, 103 Prince St. (431-6880).

Micah Moses—Paintings that depict cartoon images of technology; through 1/10. Gold, 474 Broadway (941-4641).

Martin Mull—New paintings and watercolors that depict isolated figures and ghostly profiles against hazy, ambiguous backgrounds; through 12/20. Beitzel, 102 Prince St. (219-2863).

Ray Rapp—Video sculpture and installations from the past ten years by this artist who disassembles and reconstructs television sets and video monitors; 12/3–1/8. TZ'Art, 28 Wooster St. (966-9059).

Walter Redinger—New biomorphic fiberglass sculptures; through 1/10. Algus, 25 Thompson St. (966-1758).

Diane Samuel—Photographs, cast bronzes, and ink drawings that reflect the artist's response to the history of the Munsingen region of Germany, which was the site of a euthanasia killing center used as a trial for the Nazi death camps; through 12/20. Foster, 62 Crosby St. (966-9024).

Laura Stein—Sculptures, video, and photographs that examine the ways in which culture often forces nature to conform to its standards; through 12/20. Basilico, 26 Wooster St. (966-1831).

Philip Taaffe—Recent drawings, paintings, and monotypes whose techniques and imagery draw on nature and natural history; through 1/1. Blum, 99 Wooster St. (343-0441).

Joe Zucker/Richard Artschwager—A look at the genesis of one of the artist's early cotton-ball paintings/Recent drawings of deconstructed chairs, Italian palazzi, and interiors. Through 12/20. Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway (925-6190).

Chelsea

Franz Ackermann—New paintings by a Berlin-based artist; through 1/10. Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. (627-5258).

Matthew Barney—New works derived from the artist's most recent film, *Cremaster 5,* which is being screened daily through November 4 at the Film Forum; through 12/20. Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. (206-9300).

Photograph by Danny Lyon, courtesy of Edwynn Houk Gallery.

Paul Bloodgood and Mary Beth Edelson—A "Conversation" exhibition pairing Bloodgood's word-collages combining fragments of other people's writings or paintings with Edelson's images of recontextualized female figures. Through 12/30. A.R.T. Resources Transfer, 504 W. 22nd St. (691-5956).

Robert Longo—A series of 366 small black-and-white drawings installed salon-style throughout the gallery that create a narrative using images ranging from the dramatic to the serene; through 1/10. Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. (206-7100).

Joan Mitchell and John Chamberlain—An exhibition pairing the works of these two Chicago-born artists, with gestural abstract paintings by the former and sculpture by the latter; through 1/10. Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. (242-7727).

Osvaldo Romberg—A retrospective of works from the past 30 years, including the artist's analytical color scales—canvases covered with chromatic strokes of color—and his collage paintings that extract color schemes from reproductions of art-historical icons; through 1/10. Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (352-1600).

James Siena/Lynn Aldrich—Recent paintings on aluminum slabs/Sculptures made from found and purchased objects. Through 1/10. Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. (205-0297).

Sara Sosnowy/Kim Jones—Recent paintings that incorporate collaged elements of modular rectangles, creating the illusion of an overall curvilinear web/Wall-mounted red boxes containing drawings whose images are derived from the artist's childhood, from his military service in Vietnam, and from documentation of his earlier works. Through 12/20. Weber, 529 W. 20th St. (691-5711).

Bill Traylor—Paintings and drawings of daily life by the self-taught Alabama artist, who made his first works in 1939, when he was 85 years old; through 12/24. Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (627-4819).

Eric Wolf—Black-and-white plein air landscapes painted in the woods surrounding the artist's studio; through 12/23. Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. (633-6555).

Other

Alghiero e Boetti—Postal travels, works on paper, embroideries, and documents, from 1965 to 1992; through 1/24. Esso, 191 Chrystie St. (714-8192), Wed.–Sat. 11–6.

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Graham—1014 Madison Ave. (535-5767). Abstract paintings by Karen Barth, David Mann, and Tom Martinelli; 12/4–1/17.

Hirschl & Adler Modern—21 E. 70th St. (535-8810). An exhibition entitled "Apprentice, Mentor, Friends" featuring the work of late sculptors Tony Smith and Christopher Wilmarth; through 1/24.

Sculpture Center—167 E. 69th St. (879-3500). "Suspended Instants," featuring sculpture and site-specific works by emerging artists from Rio de Janeiro and New York City at this gallery and at Art in General (see "Group Shows, SoHo and TriBeCa"); through 12/20.

Wildenstein—19 E. 64th St. (879-0500). Nineteenth-century drawings, pastels, and watercolors, by Bonnard, Cassatt, Cezanne, Courbet, David, Degas, and others; through 12/30.

57th Street Area

Goodman—24 W. 57th St. (977-7160). "20/20," with works by Baumgarten, Cragg, Dean, Horn, Richter, others; through 1/10.

Janis—110 W. 57th St. (586-0110). Paintings, sculpture, and works on paper by Albers, Brancusi, Duchamp, Giacometti, Gorky, Leger, Mondrian, Wilmarth, others; through 12/24.

SoHo and TriBeCa

Art in General—79 Walker St. (219-0473). "Suspended Instants," featuring sculpture and site-specific works by emerging artists from Rio de Janeiro and New York City at this gallery and at the Sculpture Center (see "Group Shows, Madison Avenue & Vicinity"); through 1/10.

CRG—93 Grand St. (966-4360). Paintings by Kiki Lamers, Margherita Manzelli, and Sandra Scolnik; through 12/20.

Gibson—568 Broadway (925-1192). "The Pleasure of Reading," an installation and sale of art books and catalogues; through 12/31.

Rosenberg & Kaufman—115 Wooster St. (431-4838). "About Face," a group show of small-scale portraits and self-portraits ranging in style and material, and featuring work by twelve internationally known artists, including Braes, Brown, Coffey, Hadad, Kuszek, others; through 1/3.

Senior—375 West Broadway (941-0960). "New Abstraction," with prints by Ashbaugh, Bleckner, Dona, Heilmann, Kobylarz, Row, Scully; through 12/31.

Chelsea

Marlborough Chelsea—211 W. 19th St. (463-8634). "Icon/Iconoclast," with paintings by Bacon, Clemente, Katz, Kitaj, Reinhardt, others; through 12/27.

Other

McCready—425 W. 13th St. (243-0503)." Great Graphics," with works by Bailey, Bleckner, Clemente, Close, Diebenkorn, Dine, Fischl, Held, Hockney, Jacquette, Katz, Mangold, Pfaff, Ruscha, Steir, Thiebaud, Winters, others; through 12/31.

Photography

Zeke Berman—Recent black-and-white photographs and works from the seventies and early eighties, including found-object still lifes, and diptych, triptych, and quadriptych constructions depicting shoes, shirts, pants, and stacks of clothing; 12/4–1/17. Miller, 138 Spring St. (226-1220).

John Dugdale—Recent photographs; through 1/11. Wessel + O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. (242-8811).

Lee Friedlander—Recent self-portraits; through 12/31. Borden, 560 Broadway (431-0166).

Andreas Gursky—Large-scale color photographs of landscapes and interior views; through 12/24. Marks, 523 W. 24th St. (243-0200).

ICP—1130 Fifth (860-1777), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $4, $2.50. "Images From the Machine Age: Selections From the Daniel Collection." Photographs, drawings, and prints spanning the twenties through the fifties; 12/5–2/22.

ICP Midtown—1133 Avenue of the Americas, at 43rd St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (6–8 admission by voluntary contribution), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 seniors and students. "Weegee's World: Life, Death, and the Human Drama." A retrospective of more than 200 images by the legendary tabloid-news photographer; through 3/8.

Lowinsky—578 Broadway (226-5440). Twentieth-century German photographs that were acquired from the Helene Anderson Collection and photographs produced by teachers and students at the New Bauhaus (1937–1938); through 12/27.

Danny Lyon—The first New York exhibition of photographs from Lyon's legendary book, *The Bikeriders* (1969), taken between 1962 and 1966 when he was a member of a midwestern outlaw motorcycle club; through 1/18. Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. (750-7070).

Fred McDarrah—A survey of photographs from 1945 to 1997, including images of occupied Japan, Beat poets, New York School artists, hippies, politicians, and landscapes of the American West; through 1/3. Great Modern Pictures, 17 W. 24th St. (242-2581).

Diana Michener—Black-and-white self-portraits that depict the artist in a landscape, her nude body painted white; 12/4–1/17. PaceWildenstein-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (759-7999).

Morthland—225 Tenth Ave. (242-7767). "Scene From Behind," with photographs depicting views of scenes and objects as seen from behind by Alvarez Bravo, Arbus, Callahan, Carter, Friedlander, Gibson, Levitt, Mann, others; through 1/10.

Richard Pousette-Dart—Still-life photographs by this New York School artist (1916–1992) whose paintings are the subject of a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; through 12/20. Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. (752-1223).

Richardson—560 Broadway (343-1255). Photographs of Paris by Bruce Cratsley, André Kertész, and Todd Webb; through 1/3.

Roman Signer—Photographs, videos, and sculpture from 1979 to 1997 that show ordinary objects activated in various ways and taking on a life of their own; through 12/24. Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway (925-2035).

Fred Stein—Photographs taken in Paris and New York during the thirties and forties; through 1/3. Saul, 560 Broadway (431-0747).

Bert Stern—A retrospective of the photographer's advertising and fashion work from the fifties to the present; 12/5–1/10. Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (966-6223).

Shellburne Thurber—Photographs of interiors taken over the past twenty years; through 12/20. Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. (645-1701).

Xavier Veilhan—Large-scale photographic tableaux for which props and costumes were created in an intentionally crude manner; through 1/3. Gering, 476 Broome St. (226-8195).

Nick Waplington—Photographs from the series "Safety in Numbers," an exposé of young clubbers documented in four international cities, and from "Suicide Series"; through 12/27. Solomon, 172 Mercer St. (941-5777).

Talent **In her latest sculptures, video, and photographs, Laura Stein puts a new twist on the tradition of portraiture—by revealing only what lurks beneath an object's façade. At Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster Street; through December 20.**

Museums

Alternative Museum—"Expansion Arts: Artists of Our Time II." Works by seven contemporary artists that incorporate technology; through 1/17 (museum is closed 12/22–1/1). 594 Broadway (966-4444), Wed.–Sat. 11–6; donation suggested.

American Craft Museum—"Four Acts in Glass: Installations by Chihuly, Morris, Powers, and Vallien"; through 1/18. 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535); Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 10–6, Thurs. till 8 (pay as you wish 6–8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History—"The Nature of Diamonds." An exhibition exploring all aspects of the mineral, from its geological origins to its place in history, art, adornment, and literature, featuring significant gems from around the world; through 4/26. . . . "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897–1902." A commemoration of the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897–1902, including approximately 100 archival photographs of scenes from daily life; through 5/31. Central Park West at 79th St. (769-5100); Sun.–Thurs. 10–5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10–8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Asia Society—"Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment." Mandalas from Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan, Bhutan, India, and Indonesia, and a

Photograph courtesy of Basilico Fine Arts, New York.

Kalachakra sand mandala constructed by monks from the Namgyal monastery, the Dalai Lama's personal monastery; through 1/4. 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (288-6400), Tues., Wed., Fri., and Sat. 11–6 (Thurs. to 8), Sun. 12–5; $3, $1 students and seniors, free Thurs. 6–8.

Bronx Museum of the Arts—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Studio Museum in Harlem; through 3/15. . . . "The Picnic: An Installation by Ernesto Pujol"; through 3/15. 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. 3–9, Thurs. and Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $3 suggested donation; $2 students; $1 senior citizens, children under 12 free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Monet and the Mediterranean: A Centennial Exhibition." Sixty-five paintings executed by the Impressionist during his trips to the Italian Riviera, in 1884, the French Riviera, in 1888, and Venice, in 1908; through 1/4. . . . "The Furniture of George Hunziger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth-Century America." Furniture designed by George Hunziger (1835–1898) from the museum's collection; through 2/15. . . . "Graphic Alert: AIDS Posters From the Collection of Dr. Edward C. Atwater"; through 2/8. . . . "Working in Brooklyn: A Centennial Exhibition." Works by emerging artists who show with Brooklyn-based galleries and alternative spaces; through 1/25/98. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–9, Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 students, $1.50 seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum—"Design for Life: A Centennial Celebration." An exhibition examining the role of objects in daily life through works from the museum's collection, among them architectural drawings, graphics, textiles, ceramics, glass, jewelry, rare books, and industrial-design products; through 1/4. 2 E. 91st St. (849-8420), Tues. 10–9, Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 12–5; $3, $1.50 seniors and students.

Dia Center for the Arts—"Tracey Moffatt: *Free-falling*." A group of 25 photographs and a video installation by the Australian artist and filmmaker; through 6/14. . . . "Richard Serra: *Torqued Ellipses*." Three monumental sculptures of Cor-Ten steel that explore the shaping of space rather than material as their primary subject; through 6/14. . . . "Fred Sandback: Sculpture." Sculptures created from yarn, including new works and earlier works from Dia's collection; through 1/4. . . . "Dan Flavin: 1962/63, 1970, 1996." Three installations using fluorescent light and six separate fluorescent works by the late sculptor; through 6/14. 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912), Thurs.–Sun. 12–6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio—"Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture From the Caribbean." The first comprehensive survey of the art of the Taíno, the dominant culture in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Bahamas from about 1200 A.D. to the arrival of Columbus in 1492; through 3/29. 1230 Fifth Ave. (831-7272); Wed.–Sun. 11–5, Thurs. 12–7; $4, $2 seniors and students.

Frick Collection—"From the Louvre to The Frick Collection: Poussin's *The Arcadian Shepherds*." An exhibition of one of the most celebrated icons of French art, Nicholas Poussin's painting, *The Arcadian Shepherds,* on loan from the Musée du Louvre; through 1/25. . . . "The Spirit of the Place: Selections From the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection." Paintings and sculptures from the collection of Baroness Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza; through 11/30. 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6, Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Grey Art Gallery—"Desert Cliché: Israel Now." Works that deconstruct stereotypes of Israeli culture, by eighteen contemporary Israeli artists; through 2/4. 100 Washington Square East (998-6780), Wed. 11–8, Tues., Thurs., Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–5; $2.50 suggested donation.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective." The first full career retrospective of the artist's work since 1976, including paintings, drawings, sculpture, and prints; through 1/7. 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (423-3500); Sun.–Wed. 10–6, Fri. and Sat. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $15, $10 seniors and students (this is a special admission fee for the Rauschenberg exhibits and includes entrance to the Guggenheim Museum SoHo).

Guggenheim Museum SoHo—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective." The first full career retrospective of the artist's work since 1976, including paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, and performance and technology-based pieces; through 1/4. 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500), Sun. and Wed.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–8 (6–8 pay what you wish); $15, $10 seniors and students (this is a special admission fee for the Rauschenberg exhibits and includes entrance to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum).

Japan Society—"Japanese Theater in the World." A history of Japanese theater traced through costumes, masks, puppets, musical instruments, posters, and other historic objects and ephemera; through 2/1. 333 E. 47th St. (832-1155), Tues.–Sun. 11–5; $3 suggested contribution.

Jewish Museum—"ASSIGNMENT: RESCUE, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee." The story behind the 1940–41 rescue mission undertaken by Varian Fry, a New York–based Frenchman who arranged safe passage out of France for many anti-Nazi artists, writers, scientists, and political refugees; through 3/29. . . . "Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America." The first comprehensive survey of rare, early American Jewish portraits, by Charles Willson Peale, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, and other artists, dating from 1700 through the 1830s; through 1/11. 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11–5:45, Tues. 11–8 (Tues. after 5; free); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art—"Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Fifty-five rarely or never-exhibited pages from the artist's three earliest extant sketchbooks, and 27 independent drawings, all dating from 1937 to 1941; through 2/8. . . . "John La Farge." A selection of paintings, drawings, watercolors, and stained-glass windows drawn from the museum's collection of works by the nineteenth-century American artist; through 1/25. . . . "The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." More than 250 works drawn from the collection of the nineteenth-century French artist, including paintings, pastels, watercolors, drawings, and prints by such masters as Ingres, Delacroix, Daumier, Manet, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Degas himself; through 1/11. . . . "Richard Pousette-Dart, 1916–1992." A survey of the American Abstract Expressionist's paintings and works on paper; through 2/22. . . . "The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle." Drawings by the fifteenth-century master, and by Fra Filippino Lippi, Raphael, Sandro Botticelli, and other artists in his circle in Florence; through 1/11. . . . "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era"; through 3/1. . . . "King of the World: A Mughal Manuscript From the Royal Library, Windsor Castle"; through 2/8. . . . "Klee Landscapes." Works in all media from the Berggruen Klee Collection; through 2/8. . . . "Master Hand: Individuality and Creativity Among Yoruba Sculptors." Masks, free-standing figures, containers, and architectural posts by male and female Yoruba masters who were active from the mid-nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century; through 3/1. . . . "Picasso the Engraver—Selections From the Musée Picasso, Paris." Approximately 150 engravings, etchings, and woodcuts made by the artist between 1900 and 1942; through 12/21. . . . "Annual Christmas Tree and Neapolitan Baroque Crèche"; through 1/4. 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $8 contribution, $4 children and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $8, $4 seniors and students.

Museum at F.I.T.—"Fifty Years of Fashion: New Look to Now." A selection of historically significant clothing from the museum's own collection, beginning with Christian Dior's controversial "New Look" of 1947 and ending with the contemporary fashion scene; through 1/10. . . . "The Saris of Princess Niloufer." Nine saris from a collection of saris previously owned by Princess Niloufer, one of the last of the Imperial Ottoman princesses, and a selection of drawings; through 1/3. . . . "Beads and Sequins: Scintillating Fashion." Sequined clothes and accessories from the twenties to the present; through 1/3. Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5966), Tues.–Fri. 12–8, Sat. 10–5; free.

Museum for African Art—"African Faces, African Figures: The Arman Collection." African sculptures from the collection of the sculptor Armand P. Arman; through 4/19. 593 Broadway, bet. Houston and Prince Sts. (966-1313), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $5, $2.50 seniors, students, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art—"The Image Business: Shop and Cigar Store Figures in America." A selection of life-size, carved-wood shop and cigar store figures that were made by ship-carvers from the 1840s to the 1890s; through 1/11. 2 Lincoln Square (595-9533), Tues.–Sun. 11:30–7:30; free.

Museum of Jewish Heritage–A Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Permanent exhibitions of more than 2,000 photographs and 800 historical and cultural artifacts documenting the Jewish experience from the 1880s to the present, and 24 films chronicling the memories of Holocaust survivors. 18 First Place, Battery Park City (968-1800), Sun.–Thurs. 9–5, Fri. and eve of Jewish holidays 9–2, closed Sat. and Jewish holidays; $7, $5 students and seniors.

Museum of Modern Art—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." Paintings and works on paper by the Austrian Expressionist (1890–1918), many of which have not been previously exhibited; through 1/4. . . . "On the Edge: Contemporary Art From the Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs, and video installations given to the museum by Elaine Dannheisser and the Dannheisser Foundation last year; through 1/20. . . . "Achille Castiglioni: Design!" A retrospective of works by the Italian architect and industrial designer; through 1/6. . . . "New Concepts in Printmaking 1: Peter Halley." Artworks created by Halley as digital files on computer disk, comprising wallpaper and rub-down flowcharts that are fabricated by professional printers whenever a site-specific installation is planned; through 2/8. . . . "From Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec to Andy Warhol: Exploring Techniques." An exhibition focusing on various printmaking techniques, featuring more than 70 works from the museum's collection; through 2/8. . . . "New Photography 13." Recent works by Rineke Diijkstra, An-My Lê, Vik Muniz, and Kunié Sugiura; through 1/13. . . . "A Decade of Collecting: Recent Acquisitions in Contemporary Drawing"; through 1/13. . . . "Projects: Steve McQueen." A new film/video, *Deadpan,* that is a play on the Buster Keaton 1928 silent film *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*; through 2/10. 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480); Sat.–Tues. 10:30–6, Thurs. 10:30–6, Fri. 10:30–8:30 (4:30–8:30 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $9.50, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York—"Under the Big Top: Circuses in New York." Costumes, models, props, posters, and other circus paraphernalia and

ephemera dating from equestrian John Bill Rickett's first circus on Broadway in 1793 to today's Big Apple Circus; through 2/22. . . . "Beyond the Grave: Cultures of Queens Cemeteries." Photographs of cemeteries in Queens taken by Dr. Ilana Harlow; through 3/8. . . . "A Dream Well Planned: The Empire State Building." Photographs, drawings, models, and memorabilia associated with New York's most famous icon; through 1/11. 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

National Academy Museum & School of the Fine Arts—"Fair & Free: Images of Childhood, 1827–1992." Paintings, works on paper, and sculptures depicting children; through 3/8. . . . "Art at the Edge: Framing Nineteenth-Century America." A selection of nineteenth-century frames from the collection of Eli Willner & Company; through 1/11. . . . "The Artist's Eye: Will Barnet Selects From the Permanent Collection." A selection of 40 portraits from the museum's collection, including works by Bellows, Eakins, Grossman, Lawrence, Rauschenberg, Sargent, and others; through 1/4. . . . "Barnet by Barnet: An Installation of Portraits." A selection of portraits from the fifties to the present by Will Barnet; through 1/4. 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. (369-4880); Wed.–Sun. 12–5 (Fri. until 8); $5, $3.50 seniors, students, and children under 16.

New York Public Library—"The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books." A selection of illustrated books that were originally in the collections of the Romanovs, the dynasty that ruled the Moscow Tsardom and the Russian Empire for 300 years until the Russian Revolution of 1917, and were acquired by the New York Public Library from the Soviet government in the twenties and thirties; through 2/28. . . . "A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Basement Publishing in New York City and Elsewhere." An exhibition focusing on the writers, artists, publishers, and communities who produced publications using the mimeograph machine from the sixties through the early eighties; 12/6–5/30. . . . "Dry Drunk: The Culture of Tobacco in 17th- and 18th-Century Europe." An exhibition covering the history of tobacco in Europe; through 1/3. . . . "Tobacco Leaves: Selections From the Collection of George Arents, Jr."; through 1/3. Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (869-8089); Mon. 10–6, Tues.–Wed. 11–6, Thurs.–Sat. 10–6; free.

New-York Historical Society—"Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Lights of Times Square." A look at the development of technology and imagery in Times Square's advertising signage; through 3/8. . . . "On the Nose: Eyeglasses in New York." An exhibition chronicling the history of eyewear in New York, from eighteenth-century spectacles to twentieth-century driving goggles; through 1/11. . . . "To Hell With Reform: The Race to Become Mayor of Greater New York." Illustrations and other materials from the 1897 campaign in which New Yorkers elected the first mayor of Greater New York; through 1/4. 2 W. 77th St. (873-3400); Wed.–Sun. noon–5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

Retrospective
Body Politics

There's very little Mona Hatoum, a Palestinian London-based artist, hasn't done in the name of art. Still, "Mona Hatoum," the first American survey of her work, which originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago last summer and opens at the New Museum of Contemporary Art this week (583 Broadway, between Prince and Houston Streets; December 4 through February 22), offers many New Yorkers the first opportunity to acquaint themselves with the body-, race-, and gender-related performances and sculpture of the 45-year-old artist. Hatoum, who fled her native Beirut for London in 1975 at the outbreak of civil war and graduated from the Slade School of Art in 1981, began her career as a performance and video artist in the Chris Burden–Vito Acconci–Bruce Nauman mold: walking the streets of working-class, racially troubled Brixton barefoot, dragging Doc Martens boots laced to her ankles behind her (below); crawling painfully and excruciatingly slowly on her stomach through the unsuspecting lunchtime crowds at South Hill Park, Bracknell; and displaying herself in a clear body bag covered with animal entrails. Since the late eighties, Hatoum, sensing that performance has gone the way of entertainment, has distilled the anger and political urgency of her earlier pieces in three-dimensional objects and sculptures. She employs the subtler strategies of minimalism to create works that suggest sites of conflict or uses unexpected materials and scale to disorient viewers in such works as a carpet made with pins, a necklace made with balls of her own scavenged hair, or two metal-mesh chairs facing each other, one much larger than the other. But the work that carries Hatoum's aesthetic and feelings of displacement most clearly to the fore is *Corps étranger* (1994), a video installation for which the artist had a doctor produce interior and exterior views of her body using endoscopy, colonoscopy, and echography. Shown on the floor inside a life-size cylinder and accompanied by a soundtrack of the artist's breathing and heartbeat, the circular-shaped images of Hatoum's orifices, tissues, blood vessels, and internal organs create the effect of standing on the rim of a volcano, looking down into its crater. And it suggests, quite plainly, that nothing is safe.

Edith Newhall

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center—"Jack Smith: Flaming Creature"; through 3/1. . . . "John Coplans: A Self-Portrait"; through 3/29. . . . "Jackie Winsor: Sculpture"; through 3/1. . . . "Lynne Yamamoto: Selected Work"; through 3/1. . . . "Martin von Haselberg: New Works"; through 2/1. . . . "Some Young New Yorkers: Four Artists"; through 3/1. . . . "Vertical Painting Show"; through 6/28. . . . "Heaven: Public View, Private View"; through 2/1. 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave. (718-784-2084), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $4 suggested donation, $2 students and seniors.

Pierpont Morgan Library—"Medieval Bestseller: The Book of Hours." 100 Books of Hours from the library's collection; through 1/4. . . . "Romanticism to Realism: Nineteenth-Century German Drawings." A survey of the Library's collection of nineteenth-century German drawings; through 1/4. . . . "Cultural Curios: Literary and Historical Witnesses." A selection of objects owned by famous literary figures from the Library's permanent collection; through 1/4. 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5, Sat. 10:30–6; Sun. 12–6; $6; $4 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Bronx Museum of the Arts; through 3/15. 144 W. 125th St. (864-4500); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 seniors and students.

Whitney Museum of American Art—"The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." An exhibition showing how Warhol merged the worlds of style, fashion, and contemporary art, comprising paintings, clothing, photographs, archival material, and reconstructed period window displays; through 1/18. . . . "Richard Diebenkorn." A retrospective of paintings by this California artist (1922–1993), who moved back and forth between abstraction and representation and is best known for his "Ocean Park" cycle of abstracted landscapes; through 1/11. 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (570-3676); Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 11–6, Thurs. 1–8; $8, $6 students and seniors (free Thurs. 6–8).

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris—"Pictures at an Exhibition: An Installation by Christian Marclay." An installation incorporating works from the Whitney's permanent collection; through 1/25. 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550), Mon.–Sat. 11–6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's—502 Park Ave. (546-1000). 12/3 at 10: "Sporting Art." On view from 11/29. 12/4 at 10: "Important American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture." On view from 11/29. 12/5 at 10: "Fine Books and Manuscripts." On view from 11/29. 12/5 at 2 and 12/6 at 10 and 2: "Fine and Rare Wines."

Christie's East—219 E. 67th St. (546-1000). 12/3 at 10: "Books." On view from 11/29. 12/9 at 10: "Jewelry." On view from 12/5.

Doyle—175 E. 87th St. (427-2730). 12/3 at 10: "Important Estate Jewelry." On view from 11/29. 12/4 at 1: "American Paintings and Sculpture." On view from 11/29. 12/5 at 10: "Books, Autographs, and Photographs." On view from 11/29.

Phillips—406 E. 79th St. (570-4830). 12/4 at 10:30: "Fine Antique and Modern Jewelry and Gentlemen's Accessories." On view from 11/29.

Sotheby's—1334 York Ave. at 72nd St. (606-7000). 12/3 at 10:15 and 2: "American Paintings." On view from 11/29. 12/4 at 10:15 and 2: "American Indian Art." On view from 11/29. 12/5 at 10:15 and 2: "Russian Art." On view from 11/29. 12/6 at 9:30 and 2: "Art Deco." On view from 11/29. 12/8 at 10:15 and 12/9 at 10:15, 2, and 6:30: "Jewelry." On view from 12/4.

Swann Galleries—104 E. 25th St. (254-4710). 12/4 at 10:30: "Maps & Atlases, Decorative Graphics." On view from 11/29.

restaurants

Unusual Cases...Better Bread...Obeca Li

Manhattan

Lower New York

Alison on Dominick—An impeccably turned-out room with blue banquettes and tender lighting. Perfectionist owner Alison Becker Hurt makes sure that all is well. *38 Dominick St., nr. Hudson St. (727-1188). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Arqua—Traditional Northern Italian fare—think homemade pastas, octopus salad, Venetian shellfish soup—served in a dining room that is as spare and elegant as downtown gets. Watch out: The big guy in the apron is an aspiring tenor disguised as a waiter, and he's been known to break into conversation-stopping song without warning. Owner Leo Pulito has an impressive wine cellar. *281 Church St. (334-1888). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Bouley—Born to French parents and raised on his grandparents' farm in Connecticut, David Bouley knows the basics of classic French cooking, but he's given them his own signature style. Reserve weeks in advance, especially for Friday or Saturday night. There's a prix fixe at lunch and a six-course degustation at dinner. *165 Duane St., nr. Hudson St. (608-3852). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Cascabel—An elegant dining room with a rotating art collection, at a now-bustling intersection on the eastern border of SoHo. New chef Sam Hazen has instituted a hearty, highly seasonal menu with tasting menus for vegetarians and meat-eaters alike. *218 Lafayette St., nr. Spring St. (431-7300). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Chanterelle—Spare and elegant, virtually religious, this TriBeCa restaurant is a favorite among those who want a Big Deal. Chef David Waltuck runs a grand kitchen—seafood sausage, cold fruit soups, and anything he does with truffles in season. Wife Karen runs the front room with class and warmth. *2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (966-6960). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Diva—Another hip spot at the nexus of a hip neighborhood, with Italian specialties like homemade gnocchi and lobster-stuffed black ravioli. Iron candelabras and scarlet walls set the perfect sexy downtown mood. *341 W. Broadway, nr. Broome St. (941-9024). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Ecco—A beacon in the wilderness that is Chambers Street. Old-world charm and an excellent seasonal antipasto offering. The very cozy narrow booths line the east wall, and tile floors take you back to the Gilded Age. *124 Chambers St., nr. Sixth Ave. (227-7074). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Kelley and Ping—The type of funky, lofty noodle house that could only exist—and thrive—in SoHo. *127 Greene St., nr. Prince St. (228-1212). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Montrachet—Owner Drew Nieporent now has five places in New York, including Nobu, Layla, Zeppole at the TriBakery, and Tribeca Grill, and another in San Francisco. But this is his baby—attractive, lively, and one of the first truly great restaurants in lower Manhattan. There's lunch on Fridays—try the Roquefort-and-pear salad—and dinner Monday through Saturday. *239 W. Broadway, nr. White St. (219-2777). (E) AE only.*

The Odeon—Downtown has fallen in love all over again with this TriBeCa institution. The bar's out of Dashiell Hammett, and the dining room gets everyone from the banker, his wife, and their 2-year-old to movie stars, artists, and assorted big-deal celebrities. *145 W. Broadway, nr. Thomas St. (233-0507). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Salaam Bombay—Sophisticated Indian food has made it to the heart of TriBeCa. Marble floors and a canopy above each table decorate the dining room. Regional specialties from all corners of the country include dahi batata poori from Bombay, khaman dhokla from Gujarat, and lamb pasanda from Kashmir. *317 Greenwich St. (226-9400). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

SoHo Kitchen and Bar—Grape nuts celebrate the 96-spigot Cruvinet, ordering flights of Cabernets or seven Pinot Noirs to taste and compare, but SoHo neighbors love it, too—for all those beers on tap, for the thin-crust pizza, for a glance at the game on the TV overhead. *103 Greene Street., nr. Prince St. (925-1866). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain—This 1807 landmark farmhouse serves up huge portions of smoked chicken and grilled ribs, plus regional appetizers and desserts. Bring those breath mints and Handi-Wipes for a $17.95 all-you-can-eat on Monday night. *143 Spring St. (431-3993). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Wall Street Kitchen & Bar—As downtown grows more and more residential, its halls of finance, like this former bank building, are being converted into service establishments. This sister of SoHo Kitchen & Bar offers a similarly extensive selection of beers and wines by the glass, plus such eclectic American fare as beer-braised short ribs with egg noodles, and pizza topped with shrimp, smoked bacon, and roasted tomatoes. *70 Broad St. (797-7070). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Opening

East of Odeon

More an ambitious Asian-theme dining complex than a single restaurant, TriBeCa's new Obeca Li is definitely the sum of its feng shui–prescribed parts. The micro-world of bars (sake, sushi, and kobashi, or "small dish"), dining rooms, and noodle shop (below) is dedicated to using Asian ingredients with French techniques. The unconventional menus break new ground with crispy Ipswich clams and Asian vegetable slaw, artichoke ravioli with red-pepper-miso sauce, shrimp tempura cha-risotto (made with tea), and hibachi-grilled filet mignon with avocado maki. (62 Thomas Street; 393-9887.)

Windows on the World—Chef Michael Lomonaco, formerly of the '21' Club, has landed at this landmark restaurant known for what may be the most spectacular view of Manhattan Island. His new menu focuses on sophisticated renditions of American food, including skillet-roasted bluepoint oysters with sweet shallot-caviar cream; open raviolo of forest mushrooms, pumpkin, and sage; and Maine lobster with truffles, root vegetables, and buttermilk biscuits. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's superlative wine cellar. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Below 14th Street, East

Asti—This 70-year-old Village mainstay epitomizes the concept of the singing waiter. Professional opera singers perform arias and show tunes while waiters manage to carry a tune *and* serve orders of seafood fra diavolo, Maine lobsters, and Black Angus steak. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Gotham Bar & Grill—Alfred Portale's kitchen, with its architectural ingenuity and whimsical creativity, serves as a finishing school for the city's all-star chefs before they launch their own careers. This awesome dining temple has long been a staple. *12 E. 12th St. (620-4020). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Osso Buco—Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. *88 University Pl., nr. 11th St. (645-4525). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Roettele A.G.—One of the very few places on these shores to serve a distinctive mix of Swiss and German cuisines, including hearty specialties like spaetzle, sauerbraten, Wiener schnitzel, and fondue. There's a lovely garden and, on Thursdays, the exotic strains of live Swiss music. *126 E. 7th St. (674-4140). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Below 14th Street, West

Blue Note Jazz Club and Restaurant—Should you develop an appetite while listening to some of the world's best jazz acts, this famous Village club offers a full menu, with such Continental fare as shrimp with scallops and salmon with champagne sauce. Open for brunch, too. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Boxers—A lively neighborhood American bistro on a heavily trafficked corner of Sheridan Square. The giddy bar scene brings them in, and the high-spirited frenzy and good food keep them coming back. *190 W. 4th St. (633-BARK). (I) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Greenwich Cafe—This Village café, with its plush antique wing chairs and rococo mirrors has a loungy feel and is open around the clock with a menu that crosses every border. Representative items include crab cakes with lobster sauce and fennel tempura, grilled salmon with jasmine rice, and a veggie burger with minted

Photograph by Warren Salowe

couscous. No cover for the jazz brunch. *75 Greenwich Ave. (255-5489). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Le Zoo—The newest West Village scene, with lots of Left Bank ambience. The menu sticks to standards like poulet grand mère, saumon en croute, and cassolette. *314 W. 11th St. (620-0393). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Rincón de España—Spanish restaurant offering excellent paella and seafood; very small and intimate. *226 Thompson St. (260-4950). (I) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Salam Cafe and Restaurant—This casual Arabic restaurant ensconced in a Village brownstone offers a broad variety of Middle Eastern food, including kebabs, couscous, and lamb with yogurt-and-sesame sauce, plus lots of vegetarian options. Try the Lebanese wine. *104 W. 13th St. (741-0277). (I–M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Sevilla—Regulars flock to this popular old-world Village spot for its famed paella à la Valenciana and chicken Villary. Be prepared to overdose on garlic. *62 Charles St. (929-3189). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Villa Mosconi—Peter Mosconi and his brood offer a menu as reliable as traditional Italian home cooking. Find this old-world anachronism in the heart of Greenwich Village. *69 MacDougal St. (673-0390). (M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Washington Place—The large, comfortable dining room feels vaguely colonial, with old prints on the walls and lots of dark wood, but the well-executed American menu couldn't be more modern. Standouts include maple-brushed salmon, roasted venison, and an unusually delicious cherry pie. *75 Washington Pl. (539-1776). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Ye Waverly Inn—This shrine to Colonial times offers American standards like chicken potpie, baked peasant meatloaf, Indian pudding, and hot mulled wine. The room in the landmark building, dated to 1844, has *three* working fireplaces, and is decorated, in true Laura Ashley fashion, with lace curtains and floral wallpaper. *16 Bank St. (929-4377). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Bambou—There's a new flavor on East 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like ackee-and-callaloo tart with scotch-bonnet-and-tomato salsa, and coconut-curry lobster with banana-lentil salad. The relaxing, tropical dining room and bar have already attracted such boldfaced names and beautiful faces as Harry Belafonte, Marisa Tomei, Iman, and Roshumba. *243 E. 14th St. (358-0012). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bella Donna Bar and Grill—The third in a line of inexpensive Italian pasta parlors, this downtown branch satisfies all manner of macaroni cravings, with dishes like rigatoni Carmine, penne vodka, and capellini pescatore. Cap it off with tirami su, the house dessert. *18 E. 23rd St. (505-3678). (I–M) AE, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Bolo—There's nothing discreet about Bobby Flay's neo-Spanish cooking. In a room that reminds you of Gaudí by way of Pee-wee Herman, Flay turns out fiery, bold dishes like oven-roasted mushrooms with goat cheese and chili oil as well as paella with curried shellfish and chicken. We *love* the white-peach sangría. *23 E. 22nd St. (228-2200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Brew's—As casual and comfortable as a burger joint gets. This two-story landmark always pleases. Great beer selection, and the always hospitable longtime owners, the Brew family, make this an oasis in the desert above 14th Street. A new attraction is a weekend brunch accompanied by live Irish music, and fifteen versions of that most archetypical brunch drink, the Bloody Mary. *156 E. 34th St. (889-3369). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Campagna—The *Letterman* crowd is at one table, Time Warner honchos are at another, and isn't that . . . ? Despite the frenzy of having become Media Central, this smart little trattoria serves some of the most satisfying Italian food in Manhattan. Chef Mark Straussman is to thank for dishes like rabbit in polenta, gnocchi with wild mushrooms and truffle oil, and grilled tuna with beets. *24 E. 21st St. (460-0900). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Ground Rules:

Here lie a few hundred of the city's more noteworthy restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive, $35 and over per place; (M) = moderate, $15–$30 per place; (I) = inexpensive, $15 and under per place.

Following each listing there is also a code indicating acceptable methods of payment: ($) = cash only, AE = American Express, CB = Carte Blanche, DC = Diners Club, DS = Discover, M = MasterCard, TM = Transmedia, V = Visa. "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted charge/credit card.

El Parador Cafe—Very possibly the oldest Mexican restaurant in New York City, this comfortable, dependable establishment is known for its enormous selection of premium tequilas and traditional dishes like mole poblano, carnitas, and duck with cuipotle glaze. *325 E. 34th St. (679-6812). (M) MC, TM, V.*

Gramercy Tavern—As a second act to Danny Meyer's much-loved Union Square Cafe, this Flatiron American newcomer doesn't disappoint. The main dining room manages to be both impressive and cozy, the service superlative, and Tom Colicchio's food inspired. For lesser appetites and lower budgets, the bar menu in the Tavern Room is equally delicious. Orchestrate your own cheese course and sample the varied selection of wines by the glass. *42 E. 20th St. (477-0777). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Heartland Brewery—A rollicking brewpub with a lively outdoor café and a menu as American as its Thomas Hart Benton–ish murals. Accompany your choice of microbrew with comfort food like meat loaf with buttermilk smashed potatoes, stout-glazed chicken with apricots and juniper berries, and—for adventurers—buffalo burgers. The beer-weary can sample from the city's largest selection of tequilas and single-malt scotches. *35 Union Square W. (645-3400). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

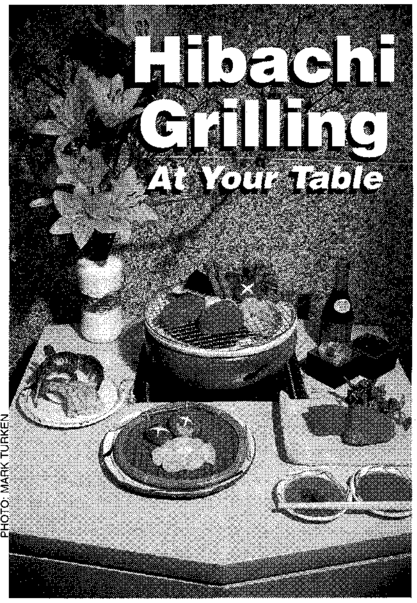
i Trulli—A Southern Italian restaurant that aims to prove that tomato sauce is not crucial for survival, i Trulli succeeds with tasty focaccia, homemade sausage, tripe, and venison. In warm weather, the garden is a perfect midtown escape. *122 E. 27th St. (481-7372). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Medusa—A lot of thought went into the décor at this new restaurant: The floors and bar are red travertine marble, and decorative ironwork details the sconces and door frames. The au courant Mediterranean menu includes such specialties as poppy-seed-encrusted tuna with lime sauce and rack of lamb with Chianti and grilled golden apples. *239 Park Avenue South, nr. 19th St. (477-1500). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Mesa Grill—Chef Bobby Flay believes in big flavors and big portions. He developed his own signature style, plundering the ingredients of the American Southwest for such mouthwatering creations as roasted-garlic shrimp tamales and ancho-honey-glazed salmon. Loud, stylish, and loads of fun, especially for those partaking of the house drink, a cactus-pear margarita. *102 Fifth Ave., nr. 16th St. (807-7400). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Oyster Bar—When a fire temporarily shuttered this Manhattan landmark, its long-faithful clientele were bereft, unsure of what to do with themselves at lunchtime. The doors have reopened, the vaulted ceilings have been repaired, and the regulars are taking their places at the counter. Famous for its 25 varieties of oysters, extensive wine selection, and comprehensive seafood preparations, the restaurant is a magnet for commuters and tourists alike. *Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (490-6650). (M) AE, CB, DS, MC, V.*

Piccolino—A country-style Italian restaurant offering homemade pastas and thin-crust pizzas in a peach stucco duplex. (The building is a century old.) Worth trying are the risotto pescatore, shrimp-pesto pizza, and veal quattroformaggio. *8*



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Rossini's—This elegant split-level restaurant offers Northern Italian cuisine and live music nightly. Chef Gilberto specializes in seafood, and private parties are easily accommodated. *108 E. 38th St. (683-0135). (E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Stock & Tankard—Those looking to unwind after a hard day at the office can find comfort in this low-key bar, which serves over fifty microbrewed beers, twenty wines by the glass, diverse martinis, and frozen drinks. The steakhouse menu includes alligator and other offbeat options. *587 Third Ave., nr. 38th St. (661-3181). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Union Square Cafe—The careful service, human-scale dining rooms, and peerless California café cuisine make this one of the best restaurants in the city. *21 E. 16th St. (243-4020). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Bright Food Shop—A Chelsea luncheonette with an innovative, healthy Mexican menu with Asian influences. Excellent desserts and a great selection of Mexican fruit sodas. *216 Eighth Ave., at 21st St. (243-4433). (I–M) ($).*

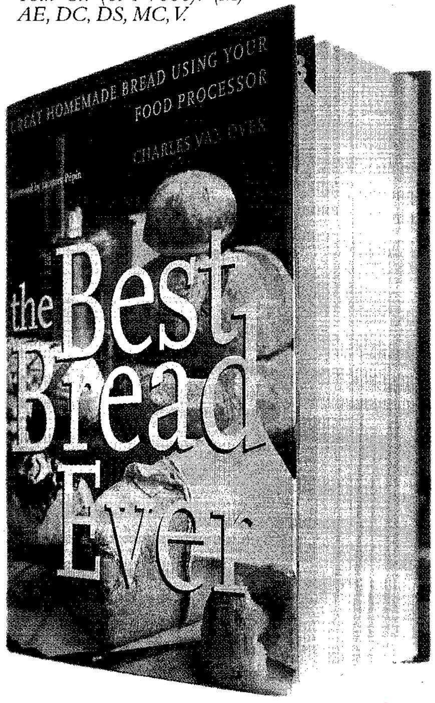
Bryant Park Grill—This long-awaited restaurant on the edge of the city's prettiest pocket park has been mobbed from day one. Go at an off-hour for Caesar salad, New York steak, soft-shell crabs, and scallion pancakes. *40th St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (840-6500). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caffe Bondí Ristorante—Popular with the photographers who work in the Flatiron district and foodies from all over who fill the garden in warm weather. Specializes in Sicilian dishes like coniglio alla stimparata, pasta con sarde, and cassata Siciliana. Open seven days a week, including weekend brunch. *7 W. 20th St. (691-8136). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Umberto—Low-key Chelsea façade belies the extraordinary Italian offerings inside. Getting a table is no small task, especially in the evening. This is a Euro–New York crossroads. A mad cacophony of laughter and chatter in Brooklynese and Roman. Don't dress down. *107 W. 17th St. (989-0303). (E) AE only.*

Simply Pasta—Perfectly situated for pretheater, this moderately priced Northern Italian restaurant offers such dependable, fresh fare as Caesar salad, osso buco, and tirami su. *120 W. 41st St. (391-0805). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Tap Room—New York's very first Austrian brewpub, with fresh lagers and pilsners on tap and a menu that indicates a seriousness about food that's rare in the microbrewery business. Goulash, spaetzle, Wiener schnitzel, and homemade sausages sound like the perfect accompaniments for beer. *3 W. 18th St. (691-7666). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*



43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Ambassador Grill—Contemporary cuisine with global accents befitting the U.N. bigwigs who stop by for lunch. The lobster-and-champagne Sunday brunch is a lavish, all-out production. *44th St. in the Regal U.N. Plaza Hotel (702-5014). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Café Centro—A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; there's inventive cooking going on here, and the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (818-1222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caviar Russe—The owners of this caviar bar and boutique are also importers, which means that you're getting your Beluga—and golden Osetra, and Sevruga—right from the source. The petite restaurant ensconced in a midtown townhouse will gladly feed you a spoonful or a more substantial meal, like a foie gras sandwich with Armagnac-soaked figs, or steak tartare with baby-beet-and-black-truffle salad. Afternoon tea and prix fixe menus also available. *538 Madison Ave., nr. 54th St. (980-5908). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cocktail Terrace at the Waldorf-Astoria—A convenient roost for a business breakfast or afternoon tea. At night, to accompany your cocktail, there's live piano music and the occasional fashion show. *301 Park Ave., at 50th St. (872-4818). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cucina & Co.—This market-style takeout shop and café is ideally situated in the lobby of the MetLife Building to catch the crush of commuters passing through Grand Central. Breakfast pastries, specialty sandwiches, baked pastas, steak-frites, and "Dinners for Two" keep the worker bees fueled throughout the day. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (682-2700). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ristorante De Grezia—As much attention is paid to the comfortable surroundings as to the Italian edibles at this East Side restaurant. The room is done up in golden oak and adorned with brass hurricane lamps, and the pasta, like the black penne with shrimp, broccoli and roasted tomatoes, gets special treatment. *231 E. 50th St. (750-5353). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Fresco—It's a family affair: The Scottos, including broadcasting star Rosanna, have created a room where you'll find stars at your feet and hearty portions of modern Tuscan fare (rich homemade pasta, thin and crispy grilled pizza, chops and fish) on the table. *34 E. 52nd St. (935-3434). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Genki Sushi—Not your typical sushi bar but a moving conveyor belt with color-coded dishes that indicate the price of your lunch. This midtown branch is the first American outpost of an Asian megachain headquartered in Singapore. The restaurant, whose high-tech design incorporates a wall of exposed sound panels, Lucite chairs and stools, and a Warholian upholstery pattern, also offers bento boxes, vegetarian dishes, sashimi, and a varied sake selection. *9 E. 46th St. (983-5018). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Giambelli 50th Ristorante—Upscale Northern Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as carefully considered. *46 E. 50th St. (688-2760). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Le Perigord—This romantic French restaurant near Sutton Place is famous for its classically prepared, elegantly presented French cuisine. The regular clientele, with a liberal smattering of celebrities and diplomats, is the type that dresses for dinner—a good thing, since jackets are required. Open Sundays. Private rooms available for parties. *405 E. 52nd St. (755-6244). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

In Print **In his new book, *The Best Bread Ever* (Broadway; $27.50), renowned home baker Charles van Over imparts his radically simple techniques for producing great-tasting crusty loaves. A food processor and a thermometer—plus a little patience—are all you need to master the basic baguette before graduating to more elaborate permutations like ciabatta, Danish twists, and olive-rosemary bread.** GILLIAN DUFFY

Lespinasse—Marie Antoinette, where are you? This ultra-formal dining room in the St. Regis Hotel—think Versailles and you get the rococo drift—is where you'll find Gray Kunz's inventive Franco-Oriental cooking. The $44 prix fixe at lunch is a gentle introduction to exactly what wonders chef Kunz can perform. *2 E. 55th St., in the St. Regis Hotel (339-6719). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mica Bar—This quiet side street in Turtle Bay is slowly becoming a spawning ground for luxe lounges. The most striking element of this new duplex is its enclosed deck bar, with a convertible roof that can open and close depending on the season. A menu of light Asian tapas features baked oysters, a variety of satays, and Hong Kong gravlax; the beverage menu, from sake cocktails to champagnes by the glass, is extensive. *252 E. 51st St. (888-2453). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Monkey Bar—David Rockwell's glamorous renovation of this landmark bar retains the original murals and sconces, and the menu offers extremely contemporary renditions of American fare, like tuna tartare with mango and avocado, and baked lobster with smoked bacon, corn chowder, and pommes Anna. *60 E. 54th St. (838-2600). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Morton's of Chicago—This midwestern import has taken Manhattan by storm, winning converts with its tender double porterhouse and men's club charm. Hard to believe it's a chain. *551 Fifth Ave., at 45th St. (972-3315). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Naples 45 Ristorante e Pizzeria—This new, sprawling Italian restaurant and carry-out in the MetLife building serves authentic Neapolitan cuisine, including excellent thin-crust pizzas, baked to order by experienced pizza masters imported directly from Italy. Also try the twice-baked sandwiches and the wide array of wines by the glass. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (972-7001). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Otabe—Customers are ministered to by their own chefs in the private teppan-grill rooms. The cool, contemporary décor—beige tones and wood paneling—in the main dining room brings serenity to midtown. *68 E. 56th St. (223-7575). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Park Restaurant—The plush surroundings in this new hotel-lobby restaurant are much fussier, but no more elegant, than the French-American fare concocted by ex-Lespinasse chef Fabrizzio Salerni. Sample dishes include porcini risotto, yellowfin-tuna tartare in wheat crust, steak-frites, and pan-roasted halibut in crispy rice paper. Piano music performed nightly, and cigar smokers have their own private lounge in which to indulge. *109 E. 56th St. (750-5656). (E) AE, MC, V.*

San Martin's—Continental cuisine with big, squishy booths. Eurocafé feel bolstered by a selection of foreign dailies on the tables out front. *143 E. 49th St. (832-0888). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Shinbashi—Authentic Japanese cuisine, including tempura, sukiyaki, teriyaki, and sushi, served in elegant surroundings. *280 Park Ave., at 48th St. (661-3915). Also, Shinbashi-an, 141 E. 48th St. (752-0505). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tatou—Gilded-plaster satyrs, bubble-toting cherubs, jazz onstage, and American-influenced French cuisine. Executive chef Michel Bourdeaux has gussied up the menu with dishes like Caribbean-style grilled swordfish on spinach, and cabbage stuffed with mushroom and roasted squab. During the more sedate lunch hour, dine to the background music of harp or a classical trio. *151 E. 50th St. (753-1144). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Torremolinos—This casual midtown restaurant serves a variety of Spanish regional dishes, like paella Valenciana and Castilian-style rack of baby lamb. *230 E. 51st St. (755-1862). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Town Crier—The American fare here includes standards like burgers and open-faced reuben sandwiches, and the ambience is geared toward rest and relaxation. Those not up for the relatively strenuous tasks of pool or darts may smoke cigars and watch any of the seven—count 'em—televi-

Photograph by Steve Wisbauer.

ASK GAEL

Good food and a little fuss are what I need.

The folks at Osteria Laguna bring hearty rustic cooking and an amiable *benvenuto* to this eastern-midtown stretch. The cavernous space hums at noon as local toilers troop in for largish pizzas and tegamini (clay pots) from the brick oven: porcini and potatoes layered with pesto and fontina, perhaps, or the truffle-oil-perfumed fonduta. The mosaic of marinated vegetables on display in the back room yields a savory house antipasto two can divide, leaving room for luscious veal-carrot-and-celery ragù swirled into green tagliatelle. And how about honey-glazed suckling pig for a holiday feast? (Call a day ahead.) Pastas and entrées, $13.50 to $25. (209 East 42nd Street; 557-0001.)

Photograph by Steve Freeman.

sion sets. *303 E. 53rd St. (223-3157). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Tropica—Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the salmon and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves the most imaginative seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. *200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (867-6767). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

American Festival Cafe—Lunch inside this glamorized eatery with rotating American folk art. Skaters in winter and a garden in the summer and early fall make for fierce window-seat competition. *Rockefeller Plaza, 20 W. 50th St. (332-7620). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Bello—Locals flock here for generous portions of well-priced Northern Italian served in a casually elegant atmosphere. Free parking from four till closing. *863 Ninth Ave., at 56th St. (246-6773). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ben Benson's—This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but the dining room is entirely devoted to the consumption of standards like lobsters, crab cakes, veal, and four cuts of steak. Free validated parking available. *123 W. 52nd St. (581-8888). (E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Bombay Palace—This newly refurbished, elegant Indian restaurant has been serving its refined versions of tandoori lobster, lamb kandhari, and chicken kashmiri to a midtown office crowd for years. Try the excellent selection of Indian breads. *30 W. 52nd St. (541-7777). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Broadway Joe—Located in a townhouse on Restaurant Row, this steakhouse serves a fourteen-ounce prime rib but also delivers fresh seafood and pasta for the omnivore. Hirschfeld caricatures cover the walls, so come find your NINAs while you dine. Discount dinner parking. Private parties. *315 W. 46th St. (246-6513). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Restaurant Charlotte—Offers a refuge from the hubbub and hustle of Times Square. Consistent American cuisine, from grilled sirloin and mashed potatoes to mushroom-dusted cod, in a postmodern setting. *145 W. 44th St., in the Millennium Broadway (789-7508). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

China Regency—This Chinese-Japanese hybrid is located conveniently in midtown's hotel nexus. Try any of the noodle dishes or a sampling from the sushi bar. Private-party facilities are upstairs. *850 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (247-6440). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Christer's—Famous for its spectacular selection of salmon, this Scandinavian-inspired restaurant, designed by David Rockwell to resemble a colorful, cozy mountain lodge, is a great choice for contemporary renditions of seafood. Open Sundays. *145 W. 55th St. (974-7224). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ciao Europa—Midtown Italian in an elegant, castlelike setting, with ceiling-high murals painted in 1937. Regulars swear by the pasta and desserts. *63 W. 54th St. (247-1200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Cité—An extravagant French steakhouse, marble and pewter with blazing chandeliers, and a more affordable grill next door. *120 W. 51st St. (956-7100). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Da Rosina—A convenient pretheater location, specializing in homemade pasta and other casual Italian fare. Try the $19.97 prix fixe. *342 W. 46th St. (977-7373). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ed Sullivan's—This restaurant's nostalgic location in the landmarked Ed Sullivan Theater informs its classic style, with "Hollywood" booths, 30-foot ceilings, and mahogany bars. The American menu—well-priced as a $21.95 pretheater prix fixe—offers such hearty fare as surf-and-turf and pan-seared scallops with truffle mashed potatoes. Live jazz and blues performed nightly. *1697 Broadway, nr. 53rd St. (541-1697). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Frankie and Johnnie's Steakhouse—The oldest speakeasy in the city. In the same location in the theater district since 1926. Try the steaks and the chops. Yes, that was Tom Selleck. *269 W. 45th St. (997-9494). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Java Shop—A full-service coffee shop, offering take-out and waiter service. The American menu includes Belgian waffles, oven-baked fried chicken, salads, and breakfast served all day long. Charles Morris Mount created a sleek, contemporary design, with a java-influenced color scheme. *1611 Broadway, at 49th St. (246-1960). (I) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

JUdson Grill—Bustling space in midtown office tower with surprisingly inventive American grill food and a bar scene to rival most. Signature dishes include Vietnamese shrimp rolls and black Angus steak with truffle "smashed" potatoes. The $32.97 pretheater dinner is a relative bargain. *152 W. 52nd St. (582-5252). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

La Côte Basque—Jean-Jacques Rachou's transplanted shrine to French cooking has preserved the Basque murals and the coddled atmosphere of the original location one block east. Modernized, with a menu more "American with a French accent," the old-world institution has been successfully reborn. *60 W. 55th St. (688-6525). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

La Crêpe de Bretagne—This midtown bistro specializes in crêpes, serving over 70 varieties, sweet and savory, plus French classics from bouillabaisse to cassoulet. *46 W. 56th St. (245-4565). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

La Veranda—Northern Italian food. A popular spot in the theater district offering generous portions of fish, seafood, veal chops and pasta. *163 W. 47th St. (391-0905). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Langan's—American cuisine in a clublike setting. Food ranges from Black Angus steaks to crab cakes and seafood. A trendy, well-heeled crowd at the much-frequented bar mixes with theatergoers in the dining room. *150 W. 47th St. (869-5482). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Lattanzi—Reliable Italian in a romantic garden. Go when there's no danger of a curtain rising or falling soon for special attention. *361 W. 46th St. (315-0980). (M) AE only.*

Le Bernardin—French-born Eric Ripert carries forth the quest of his predecessor, the late Gilbert Le Coze, for the world's most spectacular seafood. His ambitious signature dishes—scallops and foie gras with truffles, Spanish-style mackerel in Jerez vinegar, saddle of monkfish—have already won a very loyal following. *155 W. 51st St. (489-1515). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Le Rivage—Pretheater bistro: reasonable prices, efficient service, and satisfying fare. *340 W. 46th St. (765-7374). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Les Pyrenées—French Provençal cuisine. Cassoulet from Toulouse recommended, as well as filet mignon and frogs' legs. A rustic atmosphere. A lot of theatergoers. *251 W. 51st St. (246-0044). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Osteria al Doge—Cheerful restaurant in the theater district serving fine Northern Italian cuisine, with a menu that includes fritto misto, risotto, and a variety of pizzas and pastas. *142 W. 44th St. (944-3643). (M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Osteria del Circo—The restaurant of the moment, partly because of its excellent bloodlines (Sirio Maccioni's brood of charming sons runs the place) and partly because of its flavorful, home-style Italian menu. Be sure to try anything created by proud mother (and food consultant) Mrs. Maccioni. *120 W. 55th St. (265-3636). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Patsy's—If it's good enough for Frank, it's good enough for you. Upscale Neapolitan eatery rooted in the glorious fifties. *236 W. 56th St. (247-3491). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Pig and Whistle—This is midtown's notion of an Irish bar. A business clientele and a coming-and-going-to-the-theater crowd can find Irish specialties—both solid and liquid—here. *165 W. 47th St. (302-0112). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Rainbow Room—Still a favorite celebration destination, this deluxe perch 65 floors above sea level offers a variety of entertainment options. Follow a feast—now prepared by acclaimed chef Waldy Malouf—with old-fashioned cocktails in the Promenade Bar or cabaret at Rainbow & Stars. Try the prix fixe and pretheater menus. Jacket and tie required. *30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Redeye Grill—Just what the Carnegie Hall neighborhood needed: a huge room with nudes on the pillars and all manner of smoked fish on the bar. The signature dish, dancing shrimp, is great for sharing. And don't leave without sampling the banana-cream pie. *888 Seventh Ave., at 56th St. (541-9000). (M–E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

René Pujol—This theater-district oasis offers fine provincial French cooking in a sweet country-inn atmosphere. The conventionally familiar menu includes such specials as pan-seared duck breast with fruit chutney, steamed cod with coriander and ginger vinaigrette, and a salad of warm lobster, mesclun, and julienned vegetables. *321 W. 51st St. (246-3023). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse—A steak cooked in butter is the centerpiece of this successful upscale chain's take-no-prisoners march east across the country. Steak served in a series of connected, muted, and wood-paneled dining rooms. *148 W. 51st St. (245-9600). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Sea Grill—Plush, cozy dining room opens to garden tables in the summer and offers a view of the Rockefeller Center skating rink in winter. The serving team does cartwheels toting crab cakes with two sauces, lobster salad with tabbouleh in spicy lobster oil, and swordfish steak at premium prices. *Rockefeller Plaza, 19 W. 49th St. (332-7610). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Stage Delicatessen—A landmark deli that serves gigantic sandwiches, every one of which is worth returning for. *834 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (245-7850). (I) AE, MC, V.*

T.G.I. Friday's—When you crave the familiar, this casual American chain provides predictably decent grub like burgers, steaks, pastas, and potato skins. *761 Seventh Ave., at 50th St. (767-8350). Also, seven other Manhattan locations. (I) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Torre di Pisa—David Rockwell designed this midtown Italian import as a surreal version of the Leaning Tower. Pane fritto con prosciutto di Parma and fagotto al funghi porcini are examples of the chef's updated Tuscan standards. A separate cigar/smoking room is available for private parties. *19 W. 44th St. (398-4400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Victor's Cafe 52—A venerable neighborhood haunt with tropical flair. Try the Cuban sandwich or the roast suckling pork. *236 W. 52nd St. (586-7714). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

57th–60th Streets

Café Botanica—This American restaurant in the Essex House hotel is an airy, plant-filled respite from the congestion of Central Park South. Sunday brunch is a neighborhood fixture; at night, sample the chef's renditions of poached tuna Niçoise and rack of lamb. *160 Central Park So. (484-5120). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Contrapunto—Join the queue in this good-looking, updated restaurant that's added a roster of sophisticated meat and seafood dishes to its renowned pastas. *200 E. 60th St. (751-8616). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven—The country's entertainment-industry glitterati make themselves right at home in I. M. Pei's monumental dining room. Susan Weaver is one of the only working chefs to combine contemporary presentation and technique with classic Provençal on one plate. The weekend bar scene puts the concept-hotel bar scene to shame. *57 E. 57th St. (758-5700). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Opening
Family Practice

Hotel veteran Karrn Petrosian recruited his Armenian mother from California and a French banquet chef from the Waldorf to render Monk, his new bicultural bistro, as authentic as possible. The complementary cuisines merge in dishes like Armenian beef tartare, lamb stew, and roasted poussin with prunes and mixed olives; unadulterated steak frites and basturma cater to purists. The owner's ancestry even pervades the extensive wine list—a rare, eighteen-year-old Vaspurakan brandy can be had for $15 a glass. (309 East 5th Street; 228-2181.)

Photograph by Robert Wright

Les Célébrités—Plush and old-fashioned, this imposing dining room in the Essex House on Central Park South also happens to have a very fine kitchen. Dinner only. *160 Central Park So. (484-5113). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Manhattan Ocean Club—Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics and Brazilian-red-cherry floors. *57 W. 58th St. (371-7777). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nirvana—The only Indian restaurant with a superb view of Central Park and a varied menu of Bangladeshi and Pakistani specialties. Sample from a selection of curries, kormas, biryanis, kababs, tandooris, and vegetarian dishes. *30 Central Park So. (486-5700). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Rosa Mexicano—Did someone say "fresh-pomegranate margarita"? Yes, someone did. What's more, this spot prepares your guacamole tableside (a south-of-the-border hibachi?). Some of the tastier gourmet Mexican in the city. *1063 First Ave., at 58th St. (753-7407). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

San Domenico—Toques off to owner Tony May, who may have done more for the cause of serious Italian cooking in New York than any other single restaurateur. His dining room is formal, and the food is wonderful. *240 Central Park So. (265-5959). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Two Rooms—You'd never expect it, but this landmark townhouse in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge is home to an extremely eclectic establishment, with colonial African décor in the skylit upstairs restaurant and a fireplace in the low-key downstairs lounge. Some of the dishes on chef Thomas Harris's contemporary American menu include seared duck foie gras, risotto of grilled sweet corn and pancetta, and crispy salmon in rice paper. *313 E. 58th St. (223-1886). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, East Side

The Boathouse—This is a glorious oasis in Central Park where you'll find an extensive American menu, featuring such enticing dishes as the "lobster Martini," house-smoked, pan-roasted swordfish, and grilled veal chop with truffled mashed potatoes. For postprandial excitement, rent a bicycle, a rowboat, or a gondola. Live jazz Monday through Thursday. *Central Park, nr. 72nd St. and Fifth Ave. (517-2233). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Cabana—The Pan-Caribbean menu at this East Side restaurant casts wide for its influences, which range from Cuban to Aruban. At $17.95, a shellfish stew simmered in a tomato-garlic broth is the most expensive entrée. Lunch specials, especially the sandwiches like media noche and jerked chicken, are particularly good bargains. And where else could you find as eclectic an appetizer as the bocadillos, with conch and vegetable fritters, jerked chicken wings, and beef patties sharing the same plate? *1022 Third Ave., nr. 60th St. (980-5678). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Campagnola—This comfortable Italian spot has been a neighborhood favorite for over a dozen years, thanks in part to host Salvatore's warm welcome. Of course, the flavorful country-style food—Italian bouillabaisse with lobster, double-cut veal chops with wild mushrooms, antipasto—is equally endearing. *1382 First Ave., at 74th St. (861-1102). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Club Macanudo—This plush, elegant shrine to cigar-smoking also offers, besides an astonishing selection of smokes, a sophisticated variety of edibles. The American menu, listing such offbeat items as warm lobster enchiladas and pork loin with coffee-barbecue sauce, takes inspiration from Latin and Caribbean cuisines. Jackets required. *26 E. 63rd St. (752-8200). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Decade—This place bills itself as the Classic Rock Supper Club, and thus appeals to the sort of over-30 crowd that would know exactly what classic means. Besides dinner—which could be pan-seared wild salmon with a horseradish-potato crust, duck-confit-and-vegetable spring roll, or Arctic char in a fennel consommé—there's a 4,000-bottle wine vault, nearly 200 humidors, and original artwork by Warhol and Rosenquist. And dancing, of course. Jackets required. *1117 First Ave., at 61st St. (835-5979). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

El Pollo—This Peruvian chicken joint has stuck with its simple, minimal menu, to the benefit of this otherwise barren neighborhood. Potatoes come four ways, but you can't miss with the incredible curly fries. *1746 First Ave., nr. 90th St. (996-7810). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Hi-Life Restaurant & Lounge—A seamless fusion of a steakhouse and an ocean-liner lounge. The dining room's landscape is speckled with round booths so big and luxurious that they seem structural. This place has two gears: As the evening wears on, the young-moms-with-strollers eatery gives way to an East Side hot spot complete with a sushi bar. *1340 First Ave., at 72nd St. (249-3600). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Hurricane Island—This American restaurant named for an island off the coast of Maine specializes, of course, in fresh lobster and seafood, and offers a better-than-average selection of microbrews with bottles from Belgium and Germany. *1303 Third Ave., at 75th St. (717-6600). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Ici—A relative newcomer among the countless Upper East Side bistros, Ici has made a name for itself with well-executed, contemporary French fare—like grilled scallops with asparagus, and Cajun red snapper—and a fashionably chic clientele. *19 E. 69th St. (794-6419). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Isle of Capri—Three steps away from the hustle and bustle of Bloomingdale's, here's a cozy Italian spot that's been around for 40 years, serving specialties like pappardelle con porcini and trippa alla Calabrese. *1028 Third Ave., at 61st St. (223-9430). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

L'Absinthe—Chef Bergougnoux cooks exquisite contemporary and traditional French food for a most appreciative Upper East Side clientele. All the brasserie details, from the zinc bar and brass rails to the cheese tray and filleted-at-tableside sole meunière, feel more Right Bank than Manhattan. *227 E. 67th St. (794-4950). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Letizia—Upper East Side neighborhood Italian that treats everyone like a local. The food is drawn from all regions; the red snapper with fresh vegetables is a standout, as are the homemade desserts, and the wine list has won awards. Live piano music nightly. *1352 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (517-2244). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Mark's—Decked out like an English library, with plump, tasseled pillows to nest against. Fine East-West cooking and first-rate desserts. *25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (879-1864). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa City—Bobby Flay's casual uptown bastion of innovative southwestern fare offers a unique variety of quesadillas, plus heartier dishes like ribs with molasses-barbecue sauce and sweet-potato tamale with spinach. The bar attracts regulars with the house margarita, spiked with cactus-pear juice, and its selection of twenty brands of tequila. *1059 Third Ave., nr. 62nd St. (207-1919). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nino's—Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. *1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (988-0002). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Orienta—This pretty room on the Upper East Side has become a popular meeting spot for the young and the stylish. Asian accents in the décor reflect the (mostly Vietnamese) Pan-Asian fare. Chicken satay, spring rolls, tuna sashimi, and dumplings are indicative of the menu's range. *205 E. 75th St. (517-7509). (M) AE, DS, V.*

Park Avenue Cafe—A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and off-duty get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the haute neighbors rapt with signature dishes like rack of lamb and his swordfish chop. *100 E. 63rd St. (644-1900). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Post House—Clubby and comfortable, this handsome dining room specializes in good quality and big portions. The peppery Cajun-style steak is a favorite, especially with a side order of French fries or onion rings. There are dishes with decidedly less cholesterol—poached salmon, say, or lemon chicken—but this isn't a place to watch your waistline. Seriously. *28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (935-2888). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Trattoria Libertá—This Italian trattoria specializes in homemade pasta, and commemorates everybody's favorite outdoor artwork with a Statue of Liberty crown motif. *1574 Second Ave. nr. 81st St. (772-0752). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, West Side

Bella Luna—Consistently good neighborhood Northern Italian, with rotating art exhibits and a seasonal antipasto table. *584 Columbus Ave., nr. 88th St. (877-2267). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Cafe des Artistes—A smartly run, wonderfully romantic bistro with frolicking nudes on the walls. Open and serving all the time. Stop in before or after a jaunt to Lincoln Center. *1 W. 67th St. (877-3500). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Delphini—The happy hordes huddled over their plates in this candlelit restaurant love the romantic atmosphere and the wide-ranging Mediterranean menu. Try the paella, the lobster-tail-and-calamari risotto, and the sangria. The sidewalk café and cigar bar make smokers feel welcome. *519 Columbus Ave., at 85th St. (579-1145). (M) AE.*

Empire Szechuan Gourmet—It's hard to conceive of a variety of Asian food that isn't available at this Upper West Side standby. The menu ranges from Cantonese dim sum to Japanese sushi, and the weekday lunch specials (half-price sushi!) make for bargain dining. Vegetarians have a "Taste of Zen" menu all to themselves. *2574 Broadway, nr. 97th St. (663-6004). (I) AE, MC, V.*

Gabriela's—Real Mexican food. Don't come here for bulging burritos, but for fragrant chicken soup, steamed tamales that taste like corn, and tender pork marinated in Seville orange juice and spices. Try the *licuados*, fruit shakes, and the *aguas frescas*, fresh-fruit drinks, to cool off. *685 Amsterdam Ave., at 93rd St. (961-0574). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Hi-Life Bar & Grill—Big-city brasserie with retro feel—*and* a completely au courant sushi bar. During the week, the mahogany French doors, an overstuffed banquette, and the oversize goldfish tanks provide a cozy refuge for the neighborhood. Fine food that ranges from steamed dumplings to strawberry sundaes. After dinner every weekend, a D.J. tilts the place toward a party. *477 Amsterdam Ave., at 83rd St. (787-7199). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Iridium Jazz Club—The American food in this subterranean jazz club will satisfy high and low cravings for everything from lobster to fried chicken. *44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121). (M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

La Caridad—Chino-Latino soul food in a neighborhood notoriously devoid of restaurant personality. Mammoth portions, enormous lines. *2199 Broadway, at 78th St. (874-2780). (I) ($).*

Merlot Bar and Grill—The overwrought, fantastic architecture of what was formerly Iridium restaurant has been converted into this toned-down homage to the grape Merlot, of which there are 50 varieties. Representative French-American menu items include Brie en croute and salmon with lobster potatoes. *48 W. 63rd St. (363-7568). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Pasha—The Turkish food served here—octopus salad, grilled quail, lamb chops, artichokes in olive oil—suits quite well the current craze for all things Mediterranean. Both the stucco-walled dining room and a separate room for smokers are casually intimate. *70 W. 71st St. (579-8751). (M) AE only.*

Tofu—The newest Asian arrival on the Upper West Side features both Chinese and Japanese food, including fresh, handmade noodles. Lots of bargains, including daily half-price sushi and lunch specials. *2741 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-7373). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

West 63rd Street Steakhouse—Mahogany tables and red suede walls make this nice-ified steakhouse less stultifying than its midtown brethren. Twenty-foot ceilings allow for a spectacular view of Lincoln Center, and there are seafood and pasta for those who enjoy the company of a meat-eater. *44 W. 63rd St. (246-6363). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Data

Hitting the Links

Humble foods, like working-class neighborhoods, have an amazing capacity for gentrification. Haute grits come to mind. And no grade of olive oil can dress up a baked potato enough to merit the price it fetches at The Four Seasons. But perhaps the most gastronomic ground has been covered by the lowly sausage, originally conceived as a means to dispose of those less-than-prime cuts of meat. Like most food fads, nouvelle sausages were born in California, nearly a decade ago, when culinary alchemists began stuffing links with inspired ingredients like apples, artichokes, and Chardonnay. By now, chefs have discovered that the easiest sausages to sell are the putatively "low-fat" chicken and turkey versions, while exotic-game variants enjoy a cachet that doesn't extend to their porcine brethren. Perhaps the best proof of the sausage's cultural ascendancy is the pear–foie gras–and–duck specimen that Gray Kunz once featured at Lespinasse. Below, some other creative versions for anyone who's been missing links. ROBIN RAISFELD

The Lobster Club's savory duck sausages.

RESTAURANT	ALTERNA-SAUSAGES
ACROSS THE STREET 444 East 91st Street	As special: collard-wrapped duck sausages with cognac and juniper, served with lentils de puy and braising greens.
CLEMENTINE 1 Fifth Avenue, at 8th Street	As lunch special: white-bean sausage with broccoli rabe and cheddar cheese, with escarole, tomato-basil sauce, and onion rings.
THE LOBSTER CLUB 24 East 80th Street	Grilled duck sausages with ragout of lentils, parsnips, and dried white grapes.
MARGUERY GRILL 133 East 65th Street	Smoked sausage of venison, dark beer, cumin, and mustard seed over black-pepper pappardelle.
PICHOLINE 35 West 64th Street	As special: fennel-chestnut soup with wild-game sausage of venison, wild wood pigeon, partridge, and pheasant.
SAVOY 70 Prince Street	On upstairs market menu: duck sausage with spiced pears and cabbage.
SPARTINA 355 Greenwich Street, at Harrison Street	Roasted-garlic lamb sausage, served with lamb chop and breast, mushroom corn cake, and potato croquette.

Brooklyn

Cucina—A labor of love. Northern Italian in an elegant and very well appointed room. Sensational antipasti. *256 Fifth Ave., nr. Garfield Pl. (718-230-0711). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Lundy Bros.—This restored landmark restaurant serves a wide-ranging menu of fish, pasta, chicken, and steak but specializes in lobster and other varieties of seafood. Don't miss the oyster bar or the reconstructed shore dinner. Sunday brunch buffet available. *1901 Emmons Ave. (718-743-0022). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Peter Luger's—Steak for one, steak for two, steak for four, and creamed spinach. Apply for your own house credit card, or bring cash. *178 Broadway, at Bedford Ave. (718-387-7400). (E) ($).*

Two Tom's—Firehouse-kitchen ambience and a waiter who tells you what you want to eat. The double-rib pork chops are peerless, and the escarole is great, too, but refuse the mercilessly overcooked pasta when it's offered. Eat early during the week and call ahead on weekends. Regular private parties make getting a table frustrating, but it's always worth the trouble. *255 Third Ave., nr. Union St. (718-875-8689). (I) ($).*

Queens

Elias Corner—Mix with the locals in Astoria as they queue up for a table at this Greek fish tavern. Don't wait for a menu; it won't come. Instead, eyeball the counter as you enter. If the offerings look like today's catch, they are. The owner fetches the fish each morning. Opt for the deep-fried, pinky-size bait fish over the squid. *24–01 31st St., at Astoria Blvd. (718-932-1510). (M) ($).*

Pearson's Texas Barbecue—Deservedly heralded as New York's best barbecue, this cozy Queens joint draws fans from much farther than across the East River. The barbecued Texas beef is sublime. *5-16 51st Ave., Long Island City (718-937-3030). (I) ($).*

Westchester

La Cremaillere—Make sure to try this charming French restaurant even if you're not lucky enough to inhabit this posh suburb. The Widow Brush House, built in 1750, has been transformed into a modern-day source of such French country fare as roasted rack and leg of lamb with Provençal herbs, and warm brandied banana-and-raspberry tart. *46 Bedford-Banksville Rd., Bedford (914-234-9647). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Photograph by Matthew Salacuse.

nightlife

Wilson...Speeed...Portishead

Concerts

Earth Wind and Fire—Their recent albums may be nothing to write home about, but Phillip Bailey & Co.'s live show remains undiminished. Roof-raising rump-shakers like "September" still get you out of your seat like nothing else on God's green earth, and "Reasons" melts the ladies just like it did back in the day. 12/7 at 8 P.M. *Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (307-7171). $35–$100.*

Faith of Our Fathers—The perfect antidote to schlocky *Riverdance* hyperbole, this trad-Gaelic religious revue pairs the Irish Philharmonic with singers Frank Patterson, Regina Nathan, Laria O Lionaird, and Ros Ni Dhubhain. 12/8 at 8 P.M. *Carnegie Hall, Seventh Avenue and 57th St. (247-7800). $35–$75.*

Reggie Workman and Myra Melford—Workman, thumping Coltrane sideman and irrepressible bandleader in his own right, joins up with one of the avant-garde's most appealing young pianists for a night of musical fireworks. 12/4 at 8 P.M. *Merkin Concert Hall at Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330). $10.*

Navidad Flamenca: Gypsy Christmas—12/5–12/6 at 8 P.M. and 12/7 at 3 P.M. *Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400). $25–$30.*

Mandy Patinkin—With Paul Ford on piano. 12/9 at 7:30 P.M. *NJPAC, 1 Center St., Newark, N.J. (888-466-5722). $15–$47.*

Portishead—On Portishead's new, self-titled CD, the band, in a neat sleight of hand, adds orchestral accompaniment even as it strips its sound down even further. The spare, haunting trip-hop grooves they cook up are as arresting as any in pop today, and when they get those strings going, boy, get ready for goose bumps. (Speaking of which, Mary Baker Eddy, the nineteenth-century founder of Christian Science, was buried with a working telephone in her coffin, in case she needed to reach out and touch anyone from beyond the grave. The pinched, tinny abstraction with which singer Beth Gibbons's voice is rendered on "Half Day Closing" and "Seven Months" gives a fair idea of how such a call might sound.) With DJ Andy Smith. 12/5 at 9 P.M. *Hammerstein Ballroom at the Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (564-4882). $22.50.*

Puff Daddy—Sting—the unwitting co-author of Puffy's "I'll Be Missing You"—managed to swallow his pride and sing choruses from "Every Breath You Take" during Puffy's *MTV Video Music Awards* performance in September. Sadly, this time around, he appears to be otherwise engaged. But Busta Rhymes, Jay-Z, Lil' Kim, and Lil' Cease (protégés of Puffy's own late protégé, the Notorious B.I.G.), and virtually every other star of contemporary rap will be on hand to loan shout-outs and bask in the Puffster's reflected glory. 12/1 and 12/4 at 8 P.M. *Madison Square Garden. $55.50–$60.* 12/3 at 8 P.M. *Nassau Coliseum (307-7171). $45.50–$55.50.*

Cassandra Wilson—Don't call Cassandra Wilson a crossover artist. Though she's known to cover Neil Young and other rockers on her albums, Wilson is most definitely *not* a jazz-pop personality, as evidence by this weeklong tribute to that most lyrical of trumpeters, Miles Davis. 12/1–12/6 at 8 P.M. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (721-6500). $37.50.*

Talent

Smoking Grooves

Jazz-diva-in-rock-drag Beth Gibbons leads Portishead—the quartet named for its hometown near Bristol, England—in spookily beautiful trip-hop December 5 at the Hammerstein Ballroom.

Photograph by Rodolphe Baras/London Features.

Clubland

Acme Underground—The club formerly known as Under Acme, renovated and reborn as New York City's classiest small rock venue. 12/6: Rogue's March. *9 Great Jones St., downstairs (420-1934). $.*

The Baggot Inn—A cozy West Village gathering spot for NYU students and other sweater-wearing folk enthusiasts. 12/3: Karen Davis; Tom Paul. 2/5: The Frozen Ghost Musicollective. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-0622). $.*

Bottom Line—A top-notch venue—with great sound, good sight lines, and pretty decent fries—given to rock, jazz, and folk artists of all stripes. 12/3: Buster Poindexter & His Spanish Rocketship Band. 12/6: NRBQ. *15 W. 4th St. (228-7880).*

Brownies—Avenue A's divey post-college rock spot, with good tap beers, on-the-rise bands, and the occasional big name trying to keep a low profile. Cozy and congenial, even if you're not pierced. Shows nightly at 9. 12/4: Tuscadero. 12/6: Antietam. 12/7: Alternative rock's own Hanson, the Danielson Family features brothers and sister from prepubescent to twentysomething, delivering their own skewed version of alterna-pop. With the ever-swelling ranks of experimental-pop collective the Beef & Dairy Show. *169 Ave. A, at 11th St. (420-8392). $.*

CBGB & OMFUG—Ground zero of punk's Stateside explosion and, twenty years later, still a smoking, flyer-strewn pit—in a good way. 12/5: Faith. *315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052). $.*

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.—A downtown blueserie, comfortably down-home, with living-room couches behind the stage. Dedicated to bringing us the best and brightest from the midwestern blues capital. 12/5–12/6: Otis Rush. *73 Eighth Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (924-9755). $.*

Coney Island High—Originally a glam-trash revival hall, this two-level East Village funhouse now reflects the neighborhood's cultural diversity, with indie-rock and punk bands sharing the venue with some of the city's wackiest parties. 12/4: Scratchie Records Showcase. Phoenix Thunderstone; Fondly. 12/6: Lancaster County Prison; Ghost Rockets; 5 Chinese Brothers; Hangdogs; Hotwater. 12/7: Disciples of Agriculture; Coal Palace Kings. *15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959).*

The Cooler—The meatpacking district's subterranean, steel-corridored home to alternative rockers, avant-garde-jazz musicians, and mind-expanding D.J.'s. A sleekly refurbished meat locker with black light, moody atmosphere, and a Patti Smith photo. 12/4: Meridian Party. 12/5: WFMU Benefit. *416 W. 14th St. (229-0785).*

Don Hill's—South and west enough to scare away the rabble, this inconspicuous bar hosts sophisto rockers, club kids, and vinyl gourmets—all of whom groove to some of the best D.J.'s in the city. Fridays, the gay bacchanalia SqueezeBox takes over. Alternate Saturdays see the retro-music hodgepodge party "Lo-Fi," at which jump-blues, ska, and surf-rock bands rub shoulders. *511 Greenwich St. (219-2850). $.*

Fez—Mingus fever and lush *faux*-Moroccan ambience make this the neo-boho place to be on Thursdays, when the mighty Mingus Big Band rocks the house, playing the works of the great, brawling jazz bassist with a freshness and authority rarely seen in jazz today. Hidden beneath the Time Cafe, Fez takes some ambition and assertiveness to access on a crowded night. Every Wednesday, Fez presents "Stella: An Evening of Big Room Comedy," featuring veterans of MTV's *The State* and other cutups. *Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (533-2680).*

Irving Plaza—A midsize bi-level rock venue with moody chandeliers and a sort of haunted-bordello look. It's a bit of a crush near the stage, but there's an amiable bar, 119, right around the corner for a preshow aperitif. "Savoy Sundays" are weekly swingfests of ballroom dancing. 12/4: Lately, Moby has been dabbling in hard-rock and soundtracks. But for this triumphal hometown appearance he returns to what he does best: gritty, virtuosic electronica. 12/5: Los Angeles's Crystal Method can play the breakbeats with the best of England's techno-rock fusionists. They give the whole thing a Yankee twist by throwing in samples of Jesse Jackson exhorting crowds to "keep hope alive." Total rock! 12/6–12/7: Grinding Queens metal-punks Sick of It All. 12/8: Bob Dylan, fresh from the release of one of his best albums in recent years, *Time Out of Mind.* (Sold out.) *17 Irving Pl. (777-6800).*

Knitting Factory—The Disneyland of downtown music, with three floors, two stages, two microbrew-bearing bars, and some of the biggest names in now music. 12/3: Swiss guitarist Harald Haerter and old-school free-jazz riffer Dewey Redman co-lead their gutsy quintet. 12/5–12/6: The experimental-jazz scene may be overloaded with "supergroups" who swap members among themselves too often to keep track of. But Third Rail is something special. The brainchild of bassist-producer Bill Laswell, the outfit matches P-Funk keyboardist Bernie Worrell and free-blues guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer in a musical battle of wits that results in pure fireworks. With the Last Poets. 12/7: When they first arrived Stateside a couple of years ago, Prague's Uz Jsme Doma seemed to have novelty act written all over them. In fact, they turned out to be one of the most interesting alterna-prog groups, Eastern European or otherwise, ever to hit town. Catch them while you can. *74 Leonard St., bet. Broadway and Church St. (219-3055).*

Life—About six months after George Michael, wearing a CHOOSE LIFE shirt, hit it big with Wham, a parody T-shirt hit the ever-wacky St. Marks Place alterna-kitsch stalls. Today, this West Village nightspot makes the CHOOSE DEATH shirt's advice seem like a sensible alternative: For denizens of Planet Supermodel, the reimagined Village Gate may be a fine venue in which to conduct the business of stardom. For those whose visits to Life don't qualify as "Page Six" news, though, the place's menacing bouncers, pushy Euro-clientele, and cattle-car atmosphere all add up to a night of misery, humiliation, and alienation. Ergo, a reasonable person faced with a choice between Life and death might be excused for going with the latter. *158 Bleecker St. (420-1999).*

Manny's Car Wash—A little Chicago on the Upper East Side. Mondays, beware salivating yuppie swells here for ladies' night. Every Sunday, it's Manny's World Famous Blue. 12/3: The Jimmy Vivino Band with Bobby Radcliff. 12/4: Sonny Rhodes. 12/5: Johnny Allen. 12/6: Muralli Coryell. *1558 Third Ave., bet. 87th and 88th Sts. (369-BLUES).*

Mercury Lounge—Once a headstone parlor, now one of the city's hippest and most congenial music spots, hosting rock and country artists groomed for the more au courant time slots of MTV. 12/4: They Might Be Giants; You Were Spiraling. 12/5–12/7: Just in time to fill the yawning void left by the sudden demise of INXS frontman and fellow Aussie Michael Hutchence, Midnight Oil is back for more of their politically charged folk-rock. 12/8: The Jayhawks; The Bottle Rockets. 12/9: Cheater; Skism. *217 E. Houston St. (260-4700).*

S.O.B.'s—The city's premier world-music venue, presenting many acts that could fill stadia back home. 12/3: Diana King. Most nights, sets at 10 and midnight. *204 Varick St. (243-4940).*

The Supper Club—A large, grand ballroom with a starry ceiling and challenging acoustics. Every Friday and Saturday, the Tony Corbiscello Big Band pays tribute to various big-band heroes of yesteryear, after which the next generation of swingers takes over, from midnight till 4 A.M. 12/5–12/6: Tony Corbiscello Big Band; the Crescent City Maulers. *240 W. 47th St. (921-1940).*

Webster Hall—In most respects, the big advertisements outside the far end of the Midtown Tunnel for this place really say it all (subtext: "Arriving via tunnel? You're our demographic!"). 12/3: Spiritualized's new *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space* is a masterpiece of huge, atmospheric, experimental pop. Live, they intensify the gorgeous, moody wallop. With the similarly inclined, more modestly produced Acetone. *125 E. 11th St. (353-1600).*

Westbeth Theatre—The West Side's midsize, mid-priced rock venue, which makes up for some unfortunately placed columns with the pleasant addition of a sultry bar and lounge. Sandra Bernhard's hysterical *I'm Still Here, Dammit!* lives up to its name, having commandeered the place for an open-ended run. *151 Bank St. (691-2272).*

Wetlands—Travis, who are here 12/2, play soaring, anthemic, Oasis-like mid-tempo rockers. In fact, in a truly Gallagherian spirit, their new single is titled "All I Want to Do Is Rock." Their lead singer sounds quite a bit like Liam Gallagher, too. In closing: Travis sounds a lot like Oasis. 12/4: Adrian Sherwood; Audio Active. 12/5: Mephiskapheles; Dem Brooklyn Bums Big Band. 12/6: "Pharmers Almanac" Party with Percy Hill, Foxtrot Zulu, Lake Trout and Post Junction. *161 Hudson St. (966-5244).*

Phenomenon
The Need for Speeed

Steven Wright—the budding nightlife impresario, not the balding comic—leads a visitor to the top floor of Speeed, the 22,000-square-foot megaclub he's opening December 6 at 20 West 39th Street. "There could be 2,000 people in this building," he says, pointing out a spot where a set of glass doors will soon be. "And only five in that room." Welcome to Speeed's "V.V.I.P. room" (actually, unless you're Janet Jackson, you're probably *not* welcome here). The chamber's doubly significant denizens must not be confused with the very important folks out in the V.I.P. area—or, God forbid, the merely fabulous crowd downstairs on the main dance floor. With a $2.5 million investment riding on the club, Wright and his three partners need to attract plenty of business. So they've got a dozen well-connected promoters lined up to bring in throngs of fashion-world types, hangers-on, and the handful of worthies whose presence—even an invisible one up in V.V.I.P.-land—will help lure the rest. The stars-only sanctum sanctorum will be equipped with video monitors that will allow its denizens to keep an eye on goings-on in the rest of the club. "They don't want to feel isolated just because they're stars," says Earnest Williams, one of the promoters. "But of course, they need their privacy." Come spring, Speeed will bring its anti-populist ethos to the great outdoors, when it opens a roof deck with views of a Lord & Taylor storage room. "I know it's hard to believe we can have a sound system up here," says Williams. "But this whole neighborhood is commercially zoned. So if anyone complains about the noise, they're living here illegally."

ETHAN SMITH

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Jazz

Birdland—A roomy bandstand overlooking a classy boîte as suggestive of Big Band–era elegance as the club's name. 12/4–12/6: Nat King Cole's brother Freddy croons into the night. 12/8: The Chico O'Farrill Jazz Orchestra. Every Friday the Lew Anderson Big Band swings from 5:30 to 7:30. *315 W. 44th St. (581-3080).*

Blue Note—With a first-rate sound system and a great view from every seat in the house (the standing-room area at the bar's not bad, either), the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30 P.M. 12/2–12/7: Dianne Reeves. 12/9–12/14: The Mike Stern Quartet; Bill Evans & Push. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592).*

Iridium—Merlot, the artfully wacky restaurant across from Lincoln Center, hosts some formidable jazz comers in its cozy basement, along with the occasional legend. Monday nights, the Les Paul Trio holds office hours. 12/2–12/7: Rodney Kendricks Sextet. 12/9–12/14: Dave Douglas Sextet. Sets at 8:30 and 10:30, Sun.–Thurs., with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. *44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (582-2121).*

The Jazz Standard—Midtown south's newest, biggest, and happeningest hangout for hard-boppers and the men and women who love them. You can't hear the bands from the swanky first-floor restaurant, but the basement club's modified menu should more than suffice. 12/2–12/7: One For All featuring Eric Alexander. 12/9–12/14: The George Coleman Quartet. Sets Sun., Tues.–Thurs. at 8 P.M. and 10 P.M., Fri. and Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and midnight; $10–$15 cover on weekdays, $15–$20 cover on Fri. and Sat. *116 E. 27th St. (576-2232).*

Knickerbocker Bar & Grill—A wood-paneled and brass-railed restaurant with Old New York ambience and excellent—occasionally legendary—pianists. 12/3–12/6: Russ Kassoff, Linc Milliman, and Bucky Pizzarelli. *33 University Pl. (228-8490).*

Museum of Modern Art—Fridays, in addition to throwing its doors open for pay-what-you-wish night, MOMA also transforms its cafeteria into a (sort of) swinging jazz club. While no amount of imagination can render the institutional, linoleum-tile décor any more inviting than your average mass feed-trough, the concept *is* fairly happening. 12/5: East Down Septet. *11 W. 53rd St. (708-0480).*

Roulette—A TriBeCa performance space featuring experimental and adventurous music—basically, a miniature Knitting Factory. Shows at 9 P.M. 12/3: Phillip Johnston. 12/5: Jim Staley and Phoebe Legere. 12/6: Ted Reichman. 12/9: Eve Egoyan. *228 W. Broadway (219-8242). $8.*

Showman's Cafe—Harlem's subtly wonderful jazz club, where you can always get a table and the jukebox is one of the best in the city. Every Thursday, sixties organ great Reuben Wilson leads his heady trio. Sets at 10 P.M., midnight, and 2 A.M. No cover; two-drink minimum. *2321 Eighth Ave., bet. 124th and 125th Sts. (864-8941). $.*

Small's—Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. Every Sunday, the Jazz Composers Forum, followed by the Across Seventh Street Septet. Every Monday, Jason Lindner's youthful, Ellington-meets-Mingus big band. Shows start at 10 P.M. *183 W. 10th St. (929-7565). $.*

Sweet Basil—An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. 12/2–12/7: Greg Osby No'tet. 12/9–12/14: Renee Rosnes Quartet. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M., with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. *88 Seventh Ave. So., at Bleecker St. (242-1785).*

Ground Rules:

In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Photograph by Rudolpho Archuleta.

Village Vanguard—Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club, and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world. Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. 12/2–12/7: The Joe Lovano Quartet, with Kenny Werner, Dennis Irwin, and Yoron Israel. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30 P.M. *178 Seventh Ave. So., at W. 11th St. (255-4037). $.*

Visiones—Spanish food and avant-ish jazz guests, along with some funkified post-boppers. Every Monday, Gil Evans protégée and composer Maria Schneider leads her excellent seventeen-piece orchestra at 9 and 11. Every Sunday, it's the Gust W. Tsilis Quartet. Sets at 9 and 11, with extra show Fri. and Sat. at 1 A.M. *125 MacDougal St. (673-5576).*

Zinc Bar—A tiny subterranean hideout, sheltered from bustling Houston Street by heavy red drapes. Weeknights, sets at 10 P.M., midnight, and 2 A.M.; weekends at 11 P.M., and 12:30 and 2 A.M. Mondays, the Ron Affif Trio. Fridays: Raf Astor's flamenco band. Saturdays: Marianne Ebert's Brazilian-jazz quartet. *90 W. Houston St. (477-8337). $.*

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club—*Animal House* ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Sundays: "All Star Comedy." Mondays: Open-mike night hosted by David J. Tuesday–Thursday, shows at 9:30 P.M. Fridays and Saturdays, the club promises "the country's top comedians," with shows at 8, 10, and midnight. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-1000).*

Carolines Comedy Club—In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. Mondays and Tuesdays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. 12/3: Scary Monkey Productions. *1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). $12.50–$18.50, two-drink minimum.*

Catch a Rising Star—The high-class variety showplace is in the process of broadening its focus from straight stand-up to a mix of sketch and alternative comedy, theater, and musical performances. Visitors to the Catch Bar & Grill can view all of the above at "The Loft," a stage set as an N.Y.C. apartment. Tuesdays are new-talent nights. Wednesday night's "This Is Not a Test" broadcasts live on the Web. Ill-advised as it sounds, this marriage of high-tech and high jinks is novel, fresh, and entertaining—thanks in large degree to its ratio of cost (free) to talent (Janeane Garafolo, Conan O'Brien, Jon Stewart). Thursday's "The Loft" features a rotating cast of fresh-faced young comics, while Friday's "The Big Bad Music Show" explores that riskiest of all entertainment territory, humor-rock. Shows Tues. at 8:30 P.M.; Wed. and Thurs. at 9 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 9 and 11 P.M. *253 W. 28th St., (244-3005).*

Comedy Cellar—A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 9 P.M., 10:45 P.M., and 12:30 A.M.; and Sun–Thurs. at 9 P.M. *117 MacDougal St. (254-3480).*

Comic Strip—Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. *1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (861-9386).*

Talent

Miles and Beyond

If horn players all *really* want to sing, and vice versa, Cassandra Wilson and Miles Davis would have been a match made in heaven—equaling each other phrase for lyrical phrase. Treating its ostensible subject liberally, Wilson's wide-ranging "Traveling Miles" concert puts Davis classics like "All Blues" alongside her own originals and other appropriately meditative works. Alice Tully Hall, December 1–6.

Dangerfield's—Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. 12/1–12/7: Rich Ramirez; Lenny Varnedoe; Jim Norton. Fri. at 9 and 11:15 P.M.; Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45 P.M. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat.; $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. *1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (593-1650).*

f-Stop—Every Thursday night, the cutting-edge "Comedy Brothel" presents improv from such stand-ups of the moment as Dave Chappelle, Kevin Brennan, *Mad-TV*'s Brian Callem, and *The Loft*'s Dave Juskow. No cover; no minimum. *28 W. 20th St. (582-7589).*

Gotham—An elegant, trendy, and palatial comedy spot in the Flatiron district. 12/5–12/6: Billy Jaye; Jim Gaffigan; Frank Vignola. Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 9 and 11:30 P.M. Cover is $12 Fri. and Sat., $8 on weeknights. Two-drink minimum. *34 West 22nd St. (367-9000).*

New York Comedy Club—Every Friday, the NYCC presents "New York's Best African-American and Latino Comics." Every Wed. and Thurs., there's sketch comedy at 7 P.M. Shows Mon.–Fri. at 9, with extra shows Fri. at 7 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 6, 7:30, 9:30, and 11:45 P.M. *241 E. 24th St. (696-5233).*

Stand-up New York—Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Shows: Sun.–Thurs. at 7; Fri.–Sat. at 7, 9, and 11:30 P.M. 11/28–11/29: Jim David; Dave Attel; Greg Carey. *236 W. 78th St. (595-0850). $7–$12.*

Cabaret

Algonquin Hotel—For her tenth straight season in the Oak Room, the utterly charming Andrea Marcovicci has put together "All in Fun: The Songs of Mabel Mercer," in which she fêtes a cabaret star of more than one bygone era. Mercer got her start in Paris between the wars, moved to New York during thirties, and stayed, becoming a favorite of Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, among others. Marcovicci's delightful program draws on the vast repertoire Mercer developed during her five-decade career—many of the songs "orphans" (numbers dropped from Broadway shows) and tunes written specifically for Mercer. The theme offers Marcovicci something to talk about besides herself, as is so many cabaret performers' wont—instead, she offers reminiscences of Mercer—and gives coherence to a set that would otherwise be all over the map. (Still, we could probably do without Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now," which Mercer performed once—at a North Carolina high school during the late seventies.) The show's only downside is pianist Glenn Mehrbach's accompaniment. During a boogie-woogie solo on Cole Porter's "Ace in the Hole," for instance, his timing was so off that Marcovicci's attempts to dance were thwarted. Through 1/3. Tues.–Sat. at 9 (dinner at 7); Fri.–Sat. also at 11:30 (supper at 10:30). $35; $15 minimum. *59 W. 44th St. (840-6800, ext. 154).*

Asti—Singing-waiter frolics, with an emphasis on opera and operetta, are the keynote of this Village landmark. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105).*

Bemelmans Bar—Pianist-singer-institution Bobby Short supplies class, elegance, and more anecdotes than any one else in this town. $10 music charge; no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Carlyle—Every Monday, Woody Allen swings on with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band. Tues.–Sat. at 8:45 and 10:45 P.M. $50; no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Don't Tell Mama—There's nightly entertainment in their famed piano bar. 12/8: Mary Bond Davis. $10–$15 cover, two-drink minimum. *343 W. 46th St. (757-0788).*$.

Ed Sullivan's—Tucked practically inside the Ed Sullivan Theater, the old-man bar turned chichi dining spot offers swing jazz nightly and a waiter who looks just like the place's namesake. Tuesdays and Thursdays: the Ed Swanston Trio. Every Friday, Sullivan's is home to the Harlem All-Stars. Wednesday, hard swinging New Orleans clarinetist Rick Hardeman leads his quartet. Saturday, the Joe Traina Quintet, featuring Natalie English. No cover; two-drink minimum Fri. and Sat. *1697 Broadway, bet. 53rd and 54th Sts. (541-1697).*

Eighty-Eight's—A West Village venue whose unassuming façade conceals a top-notch little theater within. Saturdays, Baby Jane Dexter. $15, with a two-drink minimum. *228 W. 10th St. (924-0088).*

Maxim's—Midtown's monument to hefty art-nouveau interior design and hefty French-bistro fare. $20–$30 cover. 12/5–12/6 and 12/13–12/14: With her platinum soprano and self-deprecating demeanor, Ann Hampton Callaway is that most oxymoronic of figures, a down-to-earth diva. Her annual holiday show, *This Christmas*, revives that old New York-in-December spirit. *680 Madison Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (751-5111).*

Rainbow and Stars—Romance, prewar charm, and wood paneling, hundreds of feet above midtown. Through 12/6: Downtown pop-guru Joe McGinty presents "Loungeville, Volume One: Music to Watch Girls By," featuring the swinging sounds of Burt Bacharach, Lalo Schifrin, John Barry, and Henry Mancini. 12/9–1/2: Darlene Love, with Dennis Ray, "Love for the Holidays." $40 cover. Tues.–Sat. at 8:30 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 11 P.M.; seating for dinner is at 6:30 P.M. *30 Rockefeller Plaza 65th floor (632-5000).*

"Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know"—In the tradition of *Forbidden Broadway* comes Stan Freeman and Jay Leonhart's new broad slapstick-'n show-tunes revue. Zeroing in on tourism's wacky cross-cultural misunderstandings may no be quite the precision exercise the old West 72nd Street warhorse's fearless parodizing was. Bu does anybody go to dinner theater expecting subtlety? Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8 P.M. Sat. at 7:30 and 10:30 P.M.; Sun. at 3 and 7:30 P.M $40 cover. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599).*

Bars

Torch—An honest-to-God theme restaurant on Ludlow Street. Behind the imposing, windowles quadruple doors lurks a mammoth forties suppe club, complete with oyster bar, lounge crooner and zoot suits. (Okay, no zoot suits, but you'd fit in wearing one.) Fridays and Sundays, singer-pianis Priscilla Hood sets the mood. *137 Ludlow St., between Stanton and Rivington. (228-2838).*

Photograph by Danny Clinch/Outline

in concert

The Nutcracker at the City Ballet

Classical Music

Thursday, December 4

New York Philharmonic—Performs Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Bryn Terfel, bass-baritone; Kurt Masur, conductor. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-7000), at 8; $20–$75.*

Friday, December 5

Northern Lights—The London Symphony kicks off Lincoln Center's weeklong exploration of Jean Sibelius tonight with a performance of his songs and two symphonies. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $25–$45.*

New York Pops—Performs holiday music; Skitch Henderson, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave. (247-7800), at 8; $17–$65.*

Spacemasters at MMLXII—New music by composer-performers. *The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. (255-5739), at 9; $12.*

Saturday, December 6

New York Pops—See 12/5.

New York Philharmonic—See 12/4.

Sunday, December 7

American Symphony Orchestra—Performs choral works by Brahms. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 3; $18–$45.*

Monday, December 8

Da Camera of Houston—Performs music based on the life of Charles Baudelaire. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $25.*

Opera

Metropolitan Opera—Performs Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov,* 12/3 at 1 and 12/6 at 7:30; Britten's *Peter Grimes,* 12/2, 12/5, and 12/7 at 8; Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* 12/8 at 8. *Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (362-6000); $24–$200.*

Amato Opera—The world's smallest opera house performs Strauss's *Die Fledermaus;* Anthony Amato, conductor, 12/6 at 7:30 and 12/7 at 2:30. *319 Bowery (228-8200); $20.*

Dance

New York City Ballet—Performs Balanchine's *The Nutcracker,* 12/2–4 at 6, 12/5 at 8, 12/6 at 2. *New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (870-5570); $20–$74.*

Forever Tango—The Argentine form interpreted by Luis Bravo. *Walter Kerr Theater, 218 W. 48th St. (239-6200); $30–$65.*

Murray Louis and Nikolais Dance—Performs two world premieres, 12/2–12/6 at 8, 12/7 at 2. *Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. (242-0800); $35.*

Ground Rules:

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and public square/park performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, outdoors or in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Data

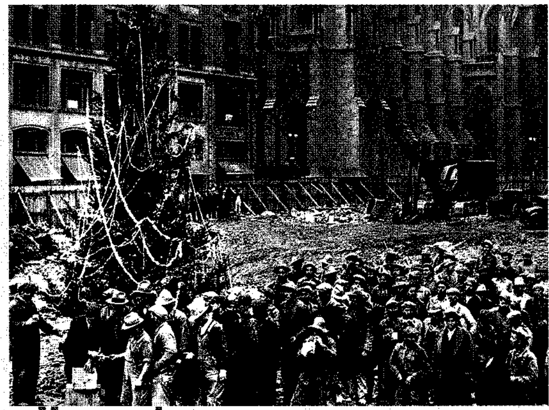
The Twelve Concerts of Christmas

THE MANGER	THE REINDEER GAMES
SYLVIA AND DANNY KAYE PLAYHOUSE (772-4448) December 1	Baroque Christmas music from Rome performed by the Clarion Music Society.
CARNEGIE HALL (247-7800) December 2	Traditional songs performed by pop stars Sheena Easton, Peabo Bryson, and Patti Austin.
CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS (928-1402) December 14	Russian sacred music and Ukrainian carols by the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York.
CARNEGIE HALL (247-7800) December 5 and 6	Carols of the season, like *The Little Drummer Boy* and *The Skaters Waltz,* by the New York Pops and the Boys Choir of Harlem.
VAN CORTLANDT HOUSE MUSEUM (718-601-7399) December 6 and 7	Dutch carols at the Bronx Arts Ensemble's twenty-third annual St. Nicholas Day Festival.
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (570-3949) December 7	Traditional and contemporary Christmas music, including Biebl's and Mouton's *Ave Marias,* performed by Chanticleer, an all-male a cappella group.
TOWN HALL (840-2824) December 8	An all-Italian holiday program performed by the conductorless chamber ensemble I Musici.
ST. LUKE IN THE FIELDS (570-7301) December 19	A caroling walk through the neighborhood with the West Village Chorale.
RIVERSIDE CHURCH (870-6784) December 21	Christmas music by candlelight, with performances by the Riverside Church's five choirs.
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH (378-0248) December 21	The premiere of Anthony Piccolo's *Pageant of the Holy Nativity,* with the St. Bartholomew's Choir.
ST. MARK'S CHURCH (718-499-7793) December 21	A winter-solstice celebration at the *exact* moment of solstice, 3:05 P.M., by the Bamboo Flute Orchestra.
AVERY FISHER HALL, LINCOLN CENTER (875-5000) December 22	The Handel's *Messiah* Sing-In with the National Choral Council and soloists Annette Nauraine, soprano, and John Koch, tenor.

Photograph by Guido Harari.

the mix

Peter Matthiessen...Angela Pintaldi



Happening
Spruced Up

It was 1931 when workmen on what was then a muddy construction site put up the first Rockefeller Center Christmas tree (above); the first formal lighting ceremony—there were 700 bulbs—followed two years later. Now covered with 26,000 lights on five miles of wire, the tree (a Norway spruce, to be illuminated at precisely 7:52 P.M. on December 2) is an institution, although not an unchanging one. To wit: After the tree's removal on January 4, its branches will be recycled by the Boy Scouts of America into three tons of mulch "for trail preservation," and its trunk will be donated to the U.S. Equestrian Team "to make jumps."

Photograph courtesy of Rockefeller Center Archives.

John Leonard's TV Notes

Moonbase (12/6; 9 to 11 P.M.; Sci-Fi) asks Scott Plank—who has already taken the rap for an Arctic ecological disaster so that his own true love, Jocelyn Seagrave, can keep her cushy job with an intergalactic megacorporation—to save Earth itself from convicts who have escaped from a maximum-security satellite prison to Scott's Moonbase waste disposal plant, where they discover, under all the garbage, a stash of positronic-pulse warheads, which not even Randy Vasquez knew about because he was too busy rigging the Dream Girl hologram gizmo to star a colleague's bare-breasted mother. Mention is also made of the White Horse of the Apocalypse.

The Story of Magic (12/7, 8 to 10 P.M., and 12/9, 9 to 11 P.M.; A&E) almost makes up for the recent Fox demystification of all our favorite like-wow magic tricks with a four-hour mini-series on the history of deception, from the ancient Egyptians through Indian shamans and voodoo priests to Houdini and Lance Burton, with time out for the humorless debunkers. See saints levitate. Traffic with humanoid "mechanicals." Contemplate Siegfried and Roy.

A Thousand Men and a Baby (12/7; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS) besides starring Richard Thomas as a Korean War Navy surgeon and Gerald McRaney as the commanding officer of his aircraft carrier, will also ask us to find credible Jonathan Banks as a priest and Doris Roberts as a nun. Their docudramatic business is to save an abandoned Amerasian baby from a hostile orphanage in Seoul and find him a good American home in time for Christmas, in spite of the Pentagon, which takes far too long to realize the whole story is the best P.R. the Navy was likely ever to have until Tom Cruise in *Top Gun*. Obvious, but affecting.

Tales From the Tomb: Lost Sons of the Pharaoh (12/8; 8 to 9 P.M.; ABC) is unfortunate in its timing, asking us to accompany Hugh Downs to the very same Valley of the Kings in Egypt where so many tourists have just been gunned down, to wander around underground in a network of tombs that may contain the bones of the 50 sons of Rameses II (the Great), and, if so, perhaps pertains to stories in the Bible and the Koran of the Flight of the Israelites in the time of the plagues. This sort of archeological detective work is more absorbing when, above ground, the real world is less bloody.

On the 2nd Day of Christmas—(12/8; 9 to 11 P.M.; Lifetime) gets Mary Stuart Masterson and her niece arrested as department-store thieves just in time to spend Christmas with lonely security-guard Mark Ruffalo, who'll not only fall in love with the Fried Green Tomato but also, with the help of Santa's elf Howard Hesseman, switch careers to become a songwriter—the sort of holiday special that's cute enough to decay teeth.

A Judy Collins Christmas at the Biltmore Estate—(12/8; 9 to 11 P.M.; A&E) ought to be taped but not listened to for a couple of weeks. Then, maybe on Christmas Eve, sing along with Collins, who looks even more terrific than this unlikely castle in North Carolina, in a pleasant mix of carols ("Hark the Herald Angels Sing" is especially wonderful) and pop standards ("I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas"), plus, of course, "Amazing Grace." A children's chorus adds some rouse.

Radio Highlights

New York & Company—Weekdays at noon. 12/2: Edward Grosvenor and his new book, *Alexander Graham Bell: The Life and Times of the Man Who Invented the Telephone.* David *Absolute Power* Baldacci talks about *The Winner.* 12/3: John Pezzenti on his photographic journey through *Alaska;* actress Irene Worth on the 150th anniversary of Ellen Terry's birth; Mary Henderson and Hugh Hardy on their book *The New Amsterdam: The Biography of Broadway Theatre.* 12/4: Journalist John Hess explains what's wrong with the world; Allen Bodner reminisces about *When Boxing Was a Jewish Sport;* New York *Times* reporter Evelyn Nieves, Dr. Barry Jordan, and former boxer Gerry Cooney discuss the hazards of boxing; 12/5: Orlando Patterson on *The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in America's "Racial" Crisis;* Walter Mosley on his new novel, *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned.* Leonard Lopate hosts. WNYC, 820 AM.

Casper Citron—12/6 at 10 P.M.: Peter Masters, member of an elite British forces unit in 1940, talks about *Striking Back: A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis;* Drew Featherston tells of *The Chunnel: The Amazing Story of the Undersea Crossing of the English Channel;* Blake Morrison discusses *As If: A Crime, a Trial, a Question of Childhood,* the gruesome true story of a murder in England; MIT's Felice Frankel talks about her book of photographs *On the Surface of Things.* WOR, 710 AM.

The Written Word

***Chère Maître:* The Flaubert-Sand Correspondence**—12/1 at 8 P.M.: Irene Worth and Peter Eyre present the New York premiere of a dramatic reading from the legendary correspondence between French authors Gustave Flaubert and George Sand. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.

A Tribute to Tennessee—12/1 at 6:30 P.M.: Stage and screen actors Myriam Cyr, Michael Wright, and other special guests celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Broadway opening of Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire.* Call for reservations. The Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800); $20.

Mark C. Taylor—12/2 at 6:30 P.M.: The critical theorist discusses *Hiding,* an exploration of contemporary ritual in postmodern society. Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (935-3592); $8.

Michael Scarce—12/2 at 7 P.M.: The coordinator of the Rape Education and Prevention Program at Ohio State reads and discusses his book *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame.* A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850).

Stan Fischler—12/3 from 6 to 8:30 P.M.: The Emmy Award–winning sportscaster, author, and public-transportation enthusiast launches his latest effort, *The Subway: A Trip Through Time on New York's Rapid Transit.* New York Transit Museum, Brooklyn Heights (718-243-3060).

George Ariyoshi—12/3 at 6:30 P.M.: The first Japanese-American governor in U.S. history and author of *With Obligation to All* discusses politics and the economic and cultural life of Japanese-Americans in the United States. Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015); $10.

Attention Dharma Bums!—12/3 at 8 P.M.: A celebration of the first-time publication of Jack Kerouac's *Some of the Dharma,* with Willem Dafoe, Karen Allen, David Amram, Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo, 10,000 Maniacs' Rob Buck, and many more. The Poetry Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 E. 10th St. (674-0910); $12.

Crime Scene: Weegee & American Noir Fiction—12/4 at 7 P.M.: John Berendt, A. M. Homes, Patrick McGrath, Linda Yablonsky, Nicholas Christopher, and Gary Indiana read from *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s* while surrounded by Weegee's photographs, whose dark content and gritty style influenced *film noir.* ICP, Midtown, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, at 43rd St. (446-5103); $7.

Greg Hewett & Alfred Corn—12/4 at 7 P.M.: A poetry reading with the *James White Review* editor, Hewett, sharing from *To Collect the Flesh* and acclaimed poet Corn reading from *Present.* A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850).

"The New Generation" Series—12/5 at 7 P.M.: Professor Paule Marshall hosts the third annual reading, which features authors Patricia Powell (*A Small Gathering of Bones*), Dennis A. Williams (*Somebody's Child* and *Crossover*), and Shay Youngblood (*Soul Kiss*). NYU's Greenberg Lounge at Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Square South (998-8816).

Jamaica Kincaid—12/6 at 2 P.M.: The acclaimed author of *Annie John* and *This Small Place* and others reads from her recent memoir, *My Brother,* the story of her sibling's battle with AIDS. To benefit Housing Works. Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St., between Houston and Prince Sts. (334-3324). Pay as you can/pay as you will.

Nin Andrews and Tome Disch—12/8 at 7:30 P.M.: A shared reading at KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (505-3360).

William Styron—12/8 at 6 P.M.: The award-winning author of *Sophie's Choice* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner* is interviewed by George Plimpton as part of *The Paris Review*'s "Writers-at-Work" live interview series. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.

Gillian Armstrong & Peter Carey—12/8 at 6:30 P.M.: The director and the writer of *Oscar & Lucinda* discuss their film. The Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44 St. (840-6800); $20.

Joan Nathan—12/9 at 6:30 P.M.: The author of *The Jewish Holiday Baker* shares stories from and signs copies of her new cookbook. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3211); free.

Lectures and Panels

Urban Genealogy: How to Conduct Architectural Research—12/1 at 6 P.M.: "The Architect" is the third focus in a five-part course explaining how to unearth detailed information about N.Y.C. buildings through standard texts, guidebooks, and periodicals. Municipal Art Society lecturer Anthony W. Robins traces the steps of the urban designer. Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (935-3960); $25.

Proust Literary Breakfast—12/2 at 8:30 A.M.: Join Harold Evans and guests Hugh Downs, Richard Howard, Daphne Merkin, Phyllis Rose, and Sam Tanenhaus for a breakfast panel discussion of the ruminative author and his work. Fred's at Barneys New York, 10 E. 61st St. (940-7480); $35.

Come in From the Cold—12/2 at 6:30 P.M.: An artist's talk by Minnesota artist-in-residence Mara Zoltners and Russian curator-in-residence Olessia Tourkina. Art in General, 79 Walker St., at Broadway (219-0473); free.

Tradition, Process & Materiality—12/3 at 7 P.M.: A panel discussion with writers Mónica Amor, Matt Freedman, and Nancy Princenthal on the exchanges between contemporary Brazilian and New York sculptors, in conjunction with the exhibition "Suspended Instants." Hosted by co-curator Claudia Calirman. Art In General, 79 Walker St., at Broadway (219-0473); $5.

Craig Hodgetts & Ming Fung—12/4 at 6:30 P.M.: Meet the designers whose multifaceted Los Angeles practice encompasses architecture, entertainment, and urban design. The talk will focus on their current projects, which include the E! Production Studio of the MCA Development Company and the American Cinematheque, Hollywood. Call for reservations. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (753-1722); $7.

John Alexander—12/4 at 6:30 P.M.: The painter discusses his work and his approach to "painting nature at its grandest and man at his worst." SVA's Amphitheatre, 209 E. 23rd St. (592-2010).

The New Jewish-American Renaissance?—12/4 at 8 P.M.: A panel featuring novelists Melvin Jules Bukiet, Robert Cohen, Rebecca Goldstein, Jonathon Rosen, Thane Rosenbaum, Dani Shapiro, and Steve Stern discussing whether we're experiencing a resurgence of Jewish-American writing. The New School's Tishman Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5488); $5.

Chaos Day Anarchist Forum—12/9 at 7:45 P.M.: Peter Lamborn Wilson serves up his annual Chaos Day Lecture, this year examining how the anarcho-federalist ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon are applicable in today's world. Followed by open discussion. Brecht Forum, tenth Floor, 122 W. 27th St., between Sixth and Seventh Aves. (979-8353); Contributions to benefit the Libertarian Book Club and Anarchist Forum.

The Banality of Wonder: High Technology & Low Taste—12/9 at 8:30 P.M.: Dr. Mark Crispin Miller, author of *Boxed In: The Culture of TV,* the forthcoming *Mad Scientists,* and *Spectacle: Operation Desert Storm and the Triumph of Illusion,* concludes the six-part lecture series "Technology: Blessing or Curse?" Call to register. The Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, at 122nd St. (678-8996); $15.

Stereotypes in American Pop Culture—12/10 at 6 P.M.: A symposium addressing nineteenth- and twentieth-century perspectives on race and gender with Rayna Green, Richard Long, John Kuo Wei Tchen, Marcia Tucker, and Ralph Sessions. In conjunction with "The Image Business: Shop and Cigar Store Figures In America" exhibit. Museum of American Folk Art, 2 Lincoln Square (977-7170); free.

Tibet's Hidden Wilderness—12/10 at 6:30 P.M.: George B. Schaller, wildlife specialist and author of *The Last Panda,* presents a slide lecture on the Chang Tang reserve, a remote region of Tibet which is inhabited by some rather curious creatures. Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, at 70th St. (517-ASIA); $10.

Tours

Art Deco Midtown—12/3 at 12:30 P.M.: Architectural historian John Kriskiewicz visits the lofty towers that once dominated the New York skyline, including landmarks like the Waldorf-Astoria and the Chrysler and Chanin buildings, which were influenced by European design but are also uniquely American in their expression of "Jazz Age" culture and technology. Meet in the Daily News Building, 220 E. 42nd St. (935-3960); $10.

The Ethnic Colony—12/6 at 1 P.M.: Travel back to the original American melting pot on an exploration of the ethnic history of Lower Manhattan prior to 1800. Visit the first synagogue, the Lovelace Tavern, the home of Captain Kidd, and the site of the 1712 African Uprising. Meet in front of Trinity Church, at Wall St. and Broadway (439-1090); $9.

Irish New York—12/6 at 1 P.M.: A stroll through the former Little Ireland district of Lower Manhattan. Stops include Old St. Patrick's Cathedral, the founding site of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Al Smith's childhood home, what was once Tammany Hall, and the site of the Five Points slum. Meet on the front steps of City Hall (439-1090); $9.

Christmas in Old Chelsea—12/6 at 2 P.M.: Tour stately Chelsea, once home to Clement Clarke Moore, author of "The Night Before Christmas." Meet in front of the Flatiron Building, at the intersection of Broadway, Fifth Ave., and 43rd St. (969-8262); $10.

Christmas on Fifth Avenue—12/6 at 2 P.M.: Enjoy the traditions of Christmas New York–style on this fact-filled walk down Fifth Avenue. See the tree at Rockefeller Center and the world-famous window displays. Meet in the Villard Courtyard of the Helmsley Palace Hotel at the northeast corner of Madison Ave. and 50th St. (969-8262); $10.

Train Buff History Tour—12/7 at 10 A.M.: Travel on the J line, New York's oldest (and newest) subway route, which brings Brooklynites to Manhattan. Led by Long Island Rail Road manager and self-proclaimed train aficionado Andrew Sparberg. Call for registration and meeting place. 92nd Street Y (996-1100); $20 plus fare.

A Village Christmas—12/7 at 2 P.M.: This tour focuses on the Village's unique history and architecture (from the eighteenth century to the present), with special emphasis on Christmas lore and yuletide customs. Meet at the Washington Square Arch at the southern end of Fifth Ave. (969-8262); $10.

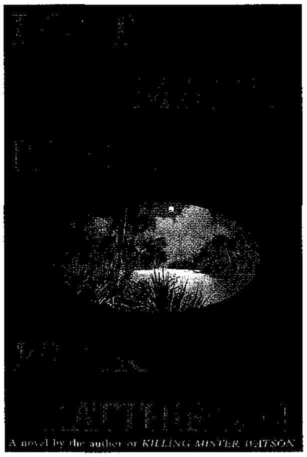
Immigrant New York—12/7 at 1 P.M.: Visit the Jewish East Side, Chinatown, Little Italy, and what were once called Little Germany, Little Ireland, and Little Africa to discover the rich history and see the contributions made by immigrants of yesterday and today. Meet on the front steps of City Hall (439-1090); $9.

Pre-Holiday Garment Center Shopping Tour—12/4, 12/9, and 12/11 at noon: Shop and save on a guided tour of New York's legendary garment district. An afternoon of great bargains, unadvertised specials, and holiday haggling. Meet in Herald Square Park,

In Print

Peter's Principles

Of all the bright young things who gathered in Paris in the fifties to found *The Paris Review,* only Peter Matthiessen went on to be more memorable as an author than as a literary middleman. His first novel in seven years, *Lost Man's River* (a kind of sequel to *Killing Mister Watson*), is just out from Random House ($26.95).



Photograph: right, Frank Ockenfels/Outline.

Broadway between 34th and 35th Sts. Call for reservations (370-4214); $10.

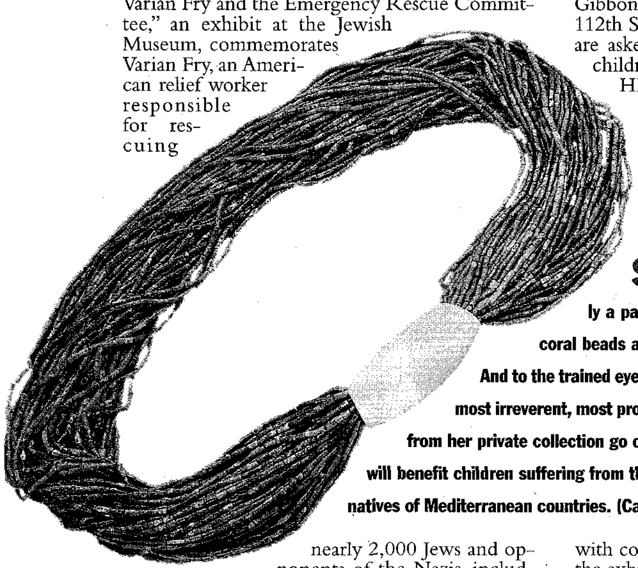
John Lennon Memorial Walking Tour—12/6 and 12/7 at noon: This walk covers a dozen sites made famous by the Fab Four and visits some of Lennon's favorite West Side haunts. Stops include Strawberry Fields, the Ed Sullivan Theatre, and the Dakota. Call for reservations and meeting place (465-3331); $12.

Metropolitan Opera Backstage—Weekdays from 10 A.M to 4 P.M.: A unique, behind-the-scenes view of the creation of the opera. Includes costume and set design, the performers' rehearsal facilities and dressing rooms, and the opulent auditorium. At Lincoln Center; call for reservations and times (769-7020); $8.

Exhibitions

Life a Century Ago—An exhibit featuring memorabilia of Jewish rituals and celebrations including the hand-painted Sukkah created in Budapest during the twenties and thirties. The Museum of Jewish Heritage, 18 First Pl., Battery Park City (968-1800); $7.

Assignment: Rescue—Through 3/29: "The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee," an exhibit at the Jewish Museum, commemorates Varian Fry, an American relief worker responsible for rescuing nearly 2,000 Jews and opponents of the Nazis, including Marc Chagall, André Breton, and Hannah Arendt, from Vichy France during World War II. Though Fry's efforts are not as well known as those of Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, his accomplishments constitute one of the most riveting chapters of the Holocaust period. The exhibit is composed largely of historic photographs, artifacts, and related works of art. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Avenue, at 92nd St. (423-3200); $7.



Shopping Even among people with only a passing interest in accessories, Angela Pintaldi's coral beads and amber bangles activate the shopping gene. And to the trained eye, they are the work of the best (most innovative, most irreverent, most prolific) jewelry designer since Elsa Peretti. Pieces from her private collection go on sale at Christie's on December 10; proceeds will benefit children suffering from thalassemia, a disease most commonly found in natives of Mediterranean countries. (Call 546-1000 for more information.)

Holiday Garden Railways Exhibition—Through 1/4 from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.: Enjoy large-scale model-railway trains as they wind through tunnels, over bridges, and right by reproductions of N.Y.C. landmarks. The New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff (Southern) Blvd. (718-817-8616); $3.50.

Mechanical Marvels: Invention in the Age of Leonardo—Through 3/1: This exhibit brings the "Renaissance of the Machine" that swept Europe in the fifteenth century back to life with large-scale silk-screen reproductions of original drawings, 50 remarkable working models, and a number of multimedia and virtual-reality stations. The show concentrates on the inventions of Filippo Brunelleschi, Taccola, Francesco di Giorgio, and Leonardo da Vinci. On view at the Liberty Street gallery at the World Financial Center. Tues.–Fri. 11 A.M.–6 P.M., Sat. and Sun. noon–5 P.M. (945-0505); $6.

Ambush in the Streets—Through 12/6: A collection of Jules Backus's photographs concentrating on *pochoirs,* Paris's constantly changing works of stencil and site-specific wall art that range from whimsically indulgent to wickedly political. It is on view at Cooper Union's Herb Lubalin Study Center for Design and Typography, in the Historic Foundation Building, 7th St. and Third Ave. (353-4214).

Events

Victorian Holidays at the Botanical Garden—Through 1/4 from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.: Enjoy music, ribbons, lights, and colorful model trains at the New York Botanical Garden's "Victorian Holidays" festivities in the Bronx. Of particular note are "A World of Plants," housed within the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory's crystal palace, and the annual "Holiday Garden Railways Exhibition" (see above). The New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff (Southern) Blvd. (718-817-8616); $3.50.

St. Nicholas Day Celebration—12/3 at 7 P.M.: The fourth annual St. Nicholas Day Celebration sponsored by AIDS Action International features performances by Lavender Light: The People of All Colors Lesbian and Gay Gospel Choir, Dorothy Papadakos, Mark Snyder, The Apollo Wind Quintet, Sandra Goodman, John Tedeschi, and Andrew Gibbons. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 112th St. and Amsterdam Ave. (316-7540); People are asked to bring unwrapped holiday gifts for children, women, and men living with HIV/AIDS, which will be distributed throughout the city.

NYC Fire Museum Art Show—12/3 from 7 to 10 P.M.: The "Art of Fire" show features the work of active and retired firefighters as well as other artists who have developed fire-related themes. A reception with cocktails and entertainment will accompany the exhibition. To benefit the New York Firefighters' Burn Center, the Widows and Children Fund, and the Fire Museum. 278 Spring St. (691-1303); $25.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Open House—12/4 from 10 A.M. to 4:45 P.M.: Commemorate the 214th anniversary of George Washington's farewell to his officers after the Revolutionary War, and the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Fraunces Tavern Museum. Festivities include concerts and performances. Admission is "pay as you wish." 54 Pearl St. (425-1778).

Medieval Christmas Fair—12/6 from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. and 12/7 from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M.: Holiday crafts, decorations, gifts, children's activities, baked delights, raffle prizes, and a silent auction. Christ Church, at Clinton and Kane Sts. Free admission.

An Evening With Daniel J. Goldhagen—12/8 at 6 P.M.: A reception and discussion with the author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners.* The evening's proceeds benefit the Jerusalem Foundation's effort to build a playground in Neve Yaacov, a disadvantaged neighborhood in Jerusalem. Republic National Bank, 452 Fifth Ave., at 40th St. (697-4188); $100.

Sports

Football—**GIANTS:** The Jints are doing it with defense—a good thing too, considering how anemic the offense has been. Sack-happy Michael Strahan is having an All-Pro year, but everyone on the front four is stepping it up. Thank the coach for that—Jim Fassel has let his guys play their own game rather than enforcing a system on them the way Dan Reeves did. Now if only the quarterbacks on the team *had* a game. 12/7: at Philadelphia at 1 P.M. (FOX). **JETS:** Games like the one upcoming against the Colts are where the Jets need to be careful. When an overachiever plays an underachiever they usually cancel each other out. That doesn't mean the Jets will lose, necessarily, but it does mean they have to be especially guarded against revisiting their '96 selves, the 1–15 team the Colts are doing a splendid impression of. 12/7: vs. Indianapolis at 4 P.M. (NBC).

Basketball—**KNICKS:** Strange as it may seem, John Starks is thriving in the fathomless depths of the Knicks roster. Although the addition of Chris Mills seemed to augur more bench time for Starks, the quick-draw guard has so far been the team's most consistent scorer. The reason seems to be that with so much talent around him, Starks feels less pressure to score, leading to a more relaxed shooting stroke and a higher field-goal percentage. Starks still puts them up like they're live grenades, but at least he's taking a breath before launching. 12/2: at San Antonio at 8:30 P.M. (MSG); 12/4: at Dallas at 8:30 P.M. (MSG); 12/6: vs. Charlotte at 1 P.M. (MSG); 12/7: at Philadelphia at 6 P.M. (MSG). **NETS:** All the injuries the Nets have suffered seem to have taken their toll in ways besides the physical. The team is not exactly a close-knit bunch, and there have even been on-court conflicts. But the Nets are slowly getting healthy, and with Kerry Kittles returning to form and Keith Van Horn finally in position to make his debut, the discord should be discarded as the winning increases. 12/1: at Utah at 9 P.M. (SC); 12/3: vs. Seattle at 7:30 P.M. (SC); 12/5: at Philadelphia at 7:30 P.M. (SC).

Hockey—**RANGERS:** Mark Messier made his emotional return to the Garden last week, once again raising the question of how the front office let the best player in team history get away. Yes, they were gambling for Joe Sakic; yes, they had Gretzky; but it has become clear that any emotion and fire this team once had went to Vancouver. 12/2: vs. Washington at 7:30 P.M. (MSG); 12/5: vs Philadelphia at 7:30 P.M. (MSG); 12/6: at Montreal at 7:30 P.M. (MSG). **ISLANDERS:** This appears to be the end for Dennis Vaske. After suffering his third concussion in as many years in a game against Tampa Bay, the Isles want to cut him loose. Vaske will meet with the same Chicago doctor who cleared the Rangers' Pat Lafontaine to play, but even if he gives the 30-year-old defenseman the green light, it's unlikely he will continue with the Islanders. 12/2: vs. Ottawa at 7:30 P.M. (SC2); 12/3: at Carolina at 7:30 P.M. (SC2); 12/6: vs. Phoenix at 7 P.M. (SC). **DEVILS:** In Jersey, Bill Guerin was finally signed, but he didn't exactly look happy about it. That's because general manager Lou Lamariello has been playing puppet-master with the right wing, even holding him off an Olympic team he clearly deserves to make. Don't be surprised by a trade before the year's out. 12/2: vs. St. Louis at 7:30 P.M. (SC); 12/4: at Pittsburgh at 7 P.M. (SC); 12/6: vs. Tampa Bay at 7:30 P.M. (SC).

The Wedge/Cube Ride—12/4 at 6:45 P.M.: It's time for another bikes-and-boards jaunt through the Village. Meet at the Astor Place Cube. Call Times Up for information at 802-8222.

Online

New York Magazine on the Web—To find the sites to surf, go online, to "Stephanie's Surf Report" at www.newyorkmag.com (in the "Today" section) where you can click directly to each day's pick. This week: Go berserk over a Net trivia show, take a virtual stroll through the streets of SoHo, control the lens of an interactive Web kaleidoscope, and dive into the razor-sharp world of cyber subculture (don't forget to bring your plug-ins!). And just in time for the holidays—a site (with, oddly, a subscription fee) to ensure your gifts are worth giving. And while you're at our site (that's www.nymag.com for short) enjoy all our Web exclusives, plus selected articles and archives from the magazine.

Photograph courtesy of Christie's

kids

Kicking...Drumming...Snowing

Ground Rules:

● = free

● = now or never (one-shot deal or final week)

Children's Events

Beat It—Eli Fountain's Percussion Discussion performs Duke Ellington music with members of Savion Glover's new tap company, as part of "Just Kidding," a collaborative series put on by the two institutions; 12/6 at 11. **SYMPHONY SPACE,** 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400). Concertgoers are invited to attend workshops with the Percussion Discussion a few blocks south at the **CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN** afterward, at 1:30 and 3. With a ticket stub to the concert, admission to CMOM is $3—a $2 saving.

Neapolitan Christmas—Part biblical re-creation, part pagan commedia dell'arte pageant, "La Cantata dei Pastori," with its period instruments, Italian Santa, and angels on stilts, is never dull. 12/6 at 8, 12/7 at 3. **CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE,** Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (924-0077); $15, $10 students and seniors, $8 children under 12. ●

Television, You Wish—Weekends through 12/14, **THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO** screens exceptional programming from around the world at "The Sixth International Children's Television Festival." This week's offerings include several shorts about coping with bullies (program begins at 12:30) and making friends (starts at 2:30). 12/6 and 12/7. 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800); $6, $4 seniors and students, $3 children under 13.

Dissecting Dance—Saturday matinee performances of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater's four-week engagement at **CITY CENTER** are especially designed for families. Kids are invited to come down to the front few rows, after the program, for a question-and-answer session with dancers. 12/6, 12/13, 12/20, and 12/27 at 2. 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212). Tickets are $25 to $55; with the purchase of two orchestra seats, additional orchestra seats are $40.

Green Eggs and Ham—Rob Kapilow's popular musical version of the Dr. Seuss story is at the **NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN.** 12/7 at 3. While you are there, take in the glorious, rustic "Holiday Garden Railways Exhibition." 200th St. and Southern Blvd., Bronx (718-601-7399); $7 includes admission to the garden. ●

Hanukkah Happening—The second day of the "Annual Hanukkah Arts Festival and Judaic Crafts Fair" (after a frenzy of shopping the evening before), the focus is on kids. Make candles and menorahs, play games and participate in sing-alongs. Jennifer Levine's one-woman show (at 3:15), *Detective Dalet Discovers the True Meaning of Hanukkah,* incorporates riddles and clues in its quest. 12/7 from noon to 5. **ANSCHE CHESED,** 251 W. 100th St. (865-0600); $5 adults, $2.50 kids. ●

Nanny Sense—How do you screen, hire, and work with a caregiver? Lori Shecter, of BabyWatch, offers some insights at **THE NEW MOMMIES' NETWORK** brunch at O'Neals, 49 W. 64th St. Future topics to be chewed on at restaurants around the city include baby-proofing the apartment and traveling *en famille.* Call 769-3846 to reserve. This particular week it's on 12/4 at 9:45 A.M. $23 includes lunch.

Amahl and the Night Visitors—**PICCOLO TEATRO DELL' OPERA** presents the Menotti children's opera, this year starring Brooklyn eighth-grader Joseph Murray. 12/11 and 12/12 at 10:30, 12/13 at 1 and 3. Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, E. 68th St. and Park Ave.. (772-4448); $20.

IMAX *Nutcracker*—Set in present-day England, a sumptuous 3-D non-ballet film version of E.T.A. Hoffmann's classic story of enchantment. 11/26–1/6/98. **SONY IMAX THEATRE LINCOLN SQUARE,** Broadway at 68th St. (336-5000). Tickets are $9.50, $7.50 seniors, $6.50 kids.

The Secret Garden—**THEATREWORKS/USA** presents a musical of the Frances Hodgson Burnett classic. Promenade Theatre, Broadway and 76th St. (627-7373), 12/6 at 10:30 and 12:30; $18.50. ●

Dance Tradition—New York City Ballet performs George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*—the standard by which all other *Nutcrackers* are measured. Through 1/4/98 at the New York State Theater, **LINCOLN CENTER PLAZA** (870-5570); tickets are $18–$72.

Circus Anniversary—"Big Apple Circus 20 Years" is here for its hometown stint at **LINCOLN CENTER** (307-4100) through 1/11/98. Grandma, the beloved cross-dressing clown, is joined by the hilarious Bello Nock. Tickets are $10–$55.

Santa Sighting—Sixty-five years and still (high-) kicking: the **RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL** "Christmas Spectacular" (see photo). Through 1/4/98. 50th St. and Sixth Ave. (307-1000); $6–$57.

Circus Oz—The animal-free circus from Australia that mixes radical and traditional with funky live rock music. Through 1/4/98. **THE NEW VICTORY THEATER,** 209 W. 42nd St. (239-6200); $10–$35. ●

A Christmas Carol—Hal Linden and Roddy McDowall alternate as Scrooge in this vast production that lightly dusts the audience with snow. Performances are through 1/4/98. **THE THEATER AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN,** 2 Pennsylvania Plaza (307-7171); $25–$65.

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The Accidental Tourists

Friends from Boston, who make a point of going annually to *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular,* swept us along with them this year. It had never occurred to us to go. The show—swanky and funny, with one crisply choreographed musical chestnut after another—is indeed flagrantly skewed to out-of-towners. We locals felt oddly out of the loop when lines like "Christmas is not complete unless I see the windows on Fifth Avenue" were uttered onstage. We exchanged glances as ice skaters glided under a replica of the gold Atlas statue at the Rockefeller Center rink (the next stop in the guidebook). By the time color slides of Central Park, St. Patrick's, and midtown began appearing in a gilded frame above the stage, we started to wonder whether the show was sponsored by the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Though technical wizardry has been added over the years—the orchestra, for example, careens up and down and back and forth on the stage—in essence the revue is a time capsule from the thirties, when both the show and its venue debuted. Sitting with a bunch of elementary-school kids who grew up with nineties values, we were acutely aware that such a politically incorrect revue could never be created today—though clones that lean on such *retro-ness* have been mounted in other cities around the country. Only tradition lets a show get away with the gender-enslaved Rockettes and the "Living Nativity," with nary a reference to other religious creeds. Today's audience rightly finds it hard to stomach the sight of "Rudolph," a mangy-looking reindeer who's cajoled across the stage. But the rest—the delectable parade of wooden soldiers, the spectacular costumes (including velvet duds with hump holes for the live camels), and the 54 dancing Santa Clauses—needs to endure. With a million or so faithful coming every year, the show is certain to live on, warts and all. Sometimes we forget how much we owe to tourists. **BARBARA ENSOR**

Photograph by Jon Simon.

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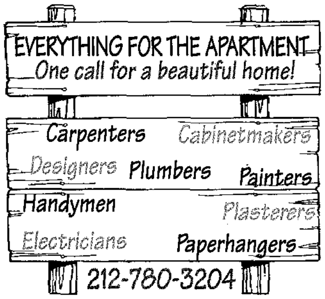

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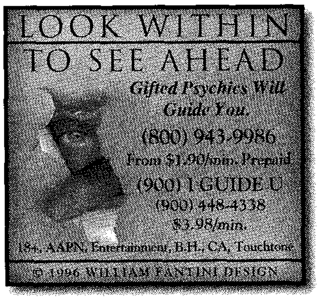

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Say Santa—Send a sensational, secure, smart man, 45-55ish, to a very pretty, witty, warm, Ivy, fashion-industry star who needs inspiration to hang the mistletoe. 9676 ✉ ☎

Romancing The Stone—Diamond wants handsome, rare setting, 45 plus. Make me laugh, teach me something, take me where I've never been. Note/photo. 9704 ✉

Almost Meat And Potatoes—But in fact prefer Lincoln Center to Radio City. Very pretty, slim Ivy attorney, corporate yet cycling star - loves indie films, France, fiction and falling in love. Please be bright, cute, available, 40s, financially secure - and enclose photo. 9655 ✉

That Special Person!—If you're a guy who's only missing that one special woman in your otherwise happy, successful life, and if you're also interesting to talk to, good to laugh with, adore the arts, enjoy sports, feel at home in the city and the country, we may be a fit. This tall, attractive, affectionate redhead with great legs, a young 50, Christian, would like to hear from you. Note/photo/phone. 9694✉

Handsome, Successful CEO—Seeks soul mate. Looking for someone special to share life filled with laughter, love and happiness. Stubbornly holding out for smart, beautiful, confident and sexy woman, 25-35, who'll bring out the best in me. Note/photo a must. 9680 ✉

Distinguished, Creative Surgeon—With much humor, passion - a handsome, old-fashioned romantic with zest for life, fitness, laughter, 5'10", fun, 43, seeks caring woman under 37, with angel's heart, to share life's joys and so much more. Please, phone/photo a must. 9707 ✉ ☎

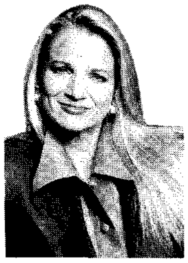
Handsome, Sensuous And Sincere—Successful, very fit and trim PhD male, looking for soul mate in her 40s. Let's talk, meet and see if the chemistry is right. Note/photo. 9693 ✉

Admires Jean Valjean—As well as George Bailey and Atticus Finch. I also feel pity for the Phantom and Javert. I'm eclectic. I also love U-2! Busy male professional, contemplating settling down and starting a family. Would like to explore a relationship with an attractive, slim, comfortably sensual, intelligent, independent, compassionate and principled woman. My interests are diverse and include relaxing with a good book or a good friend by a cozy fireplace on a stormy day, dining out or dining in, the theater and movies, domestic and foreign travel, and spectator sports. Friends assert that my positive attributes include personal warmth, interesting conversation, a charming sense of humor, "teddy bearish" hug appeal, gentle and loving yet passionate sensuality, unwavering honesty and a healthy degree of humility. I'd like to invite you to judge for yourself. Let's exchange letters and photo. 9699 ✉

Sexy, Good-Looking, Creative—Kind, funny, financially secure man, fully follicled, baggageless but ready for a long trip. 6', 185 lbs, cursed with genius and pet allergies - seeks attractive, smart, warmhearted, slim but carnivorous female (26-38) who likes the arts, nature and herself. Handwritten note/photo, please. No cigarettes/Republicans, thanx. 9705 ✉

The Little Prince—Is seeking a potential Princess to share castles in Manhattan, sky and Malibu Beach. Lovable, boyish 50ish (looks 40ish), cute mensch - funny, sensuous, creative. Loves musical theater, arts, cooking and exotic travel. Be petite (under 5'3"), distinctive, very attractive and worthy of sharing unique domain. Photo. marshcons@AOL.com. 9677✉☎

Male Physician—Successful, Jewish, nonreligious, who loves the arts, travel, nature and people. Is adventurous, has a quiet sense of humor and is somewhat mischievous - not afraid of love and commitment. Is vital, romantic and passionate, and, at 70 plus, seeks female to 55. Photo, please. 9703 ✉



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310-276-0072 BEVERLY HILLS

Irish Eyes—Very handsome, ex-Wall Street executive - now entrepreneur. Interests include martial arts, ballroom dancing, fine dining, Lincoln Center. Seeking an attractive, interesting and fun lady who is intelligent and classy, 35-43. I am 50, 5'9", brown hair and blue eyes. Photo and note, please. 9692 ✉

Two Hearts Beat As One—Hopefully in NYC. That's what this divorced white male is looking for. I'm 51, a little less hair, a bit more weight, but much wiser than I was at 20. Looking for a woman - attractive, funny, sexy, warm, relationship-minded. Note, photo and phone. 9681 ✉☎

Seeking A Sweet, Smart And Sexy—Woman who's pretty, fit and confident, for fun-filled future - by attractive, affectionate, bright and creative Manhattan guy, 46, who enjoys the arts, movies, cooking, dancing, sailing, skiing and more. Note/photo/phone, please. 9688 ✉

Great Gal—Good-looking, gorgeous legs, gourmet cook, seeks genuine, gregarious, groomed well gentleman. "G" I'd like to meet you, 60 or over. Note/photo/phone. 9670 ✉

Physician, 45, Jewish—5'6", slim, handsome, kind, gentle, caring - seeks bright, attractive, professional Jewish female for fun, passion and whatever fate allows. Photo appreciated; will reciprocate. 9668 ✉

Shiksa Looks, Jewish Soul—Beautiful blond lawyer turned entertainment executive - warm, bubbly, sexy, feminine, mid 30s, great smile - seeks smart, successful, romantic Jewish soul mate to pamper and love. 9667 ✉

Rich, Superficial Male—Interested only in looks. If you are under 43, with a great body and the face of a Botticelli, please send note/photo. Harvard grads need not apply! 9732 ✉

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A healthy-looking, 40-year-old, green-eyed blond, happily cheering at an Eagles game or skiing down the slopes in Vail, and then the two of you enjoying a cozy scrumptious meal served with a dollop of good humor and homey conviviality. That's an accurate description of this low-key but energetic, athletic lawyer with a social conscience, who's a CEO of a company that develops affordable housing communities. If you are good-hearted, affectionate, down-to-earth and in the NY/Philly area, we'd like to meet you and possibly make the introduction.

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Do You Know Why—"Atlas Shrugged" and "Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas" should be sold in sets? Woman, 37, seeks brilliant man with an answer. 9718 ✉ ☎

Successful, Handsome—6'2", 38, looking for that special someone for a committed relationship. Photo/phone. 9669 ✉

Sassy, Foxy Jewish Lady—Silver hair, baby blues, loves life. Seeks fit, 65-75, caring mensch to laugh and explore new horizons with. Let's stay young together. Note/photo desirable. 9672 ✉

Wit And Wisdom—Successful, intelligent, leggy blond, 5'9" - likes golf, skiing, hiking and artistic pursuits. Looking for a 50-plus, dynamic, successful, high-energy man who loves fun, laughter and excitement. 9720 ✉ ☎

Terrific Catch!—Attractive, wealthy, romantic man, 38, 5'10" - loves sports, the arts and travel. Looking for a 27-36, beautiful, smart, sexy woman for a fabulous romance. Note/photo. 9664 ✉

Young, Attractive Widow—Is looking for young, attractive widower. European preferred. 9660 ✉

Attractive, Open-Hearted Woman—Professional, 50, Jewish, seeks bright, warm man. Love classical music, cinema, country walks, intimacy. Great Neck. 9653 ✉

Share Sesame Noodles With Me—Pretty, smart, warm, fun, successful, professional Jewish woman, 40, great figure and smile. Besides noodles, I enjoy Miles Davis and Mozart; tennis, cycling and hiking; Paris and Tibet; West End Avenue and Sagg Road. I'm looking for my professionally and emotionally secure male counterpart (40-50) - someone who really enjoys people and life and wants a committed, loving relationship. Note/photo, please. 9727 ✉ ☎

Do You Like To Travel???—29-year-old single white male, attractive, successful and easygoing, seeks single white female, 20-30, intelligent and fun, for exploring New York City and the world. A note and photo guarantees a response. It's getting cold - let's go somewhere warm! 9665 ✉

Let's Connect—Dynamic, unpretentious, warm, 52, petite Westchester charmer with looks, smarts and sensitivity, seeks professional male with character. 9717 ✉ ☎

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Stunning Woman With Savvy—Slim, elegant, smart, seeks creative, successful, fit man, 48-60. Photo. 9696 ✉

Stunning Strawberry Blond—34, smart, funny and strictly downtown. I'm looking for a fabulous guy, under 40 and over 5'10", who has the wit and energy to keep up with me. If you are up for the challenge, you will not be disappointed. Please send note and photo. 9726 ✉

Beautiful Inside And Out—Woman, 44, finally ready to partner for life. Generous, bright, accomplished, thoughtful, optimistic, zany. Loves ocean, city, movies, theater, entertaining, great conversation, quiet rainy Saturdays. I remind people of Liza and, oh yeah...I'm a sucker for handsome. Photo. 9691✉☎

Handsome, Successful—Honest, sincere, down-to-earth - likes dining out, theater, traveling. Looking for female, 28-35. Note/photo. 9662 ✉

Handsome, Charming—Millionaire, early 60s, seeks attractive younger woman for loving relationship. Note/photo please. 9678✉

Unique White Male—Seeks Asian-American lady, 23-39, beautiful in soul and visage, possessing original thought and in love with life essence. Common interests not important, for the heart has its reasons that reason cannot see. 9666 ✉

Huggable, Handsome MD—45, never-married, fit, no baggage, 5'11", Jewish, in search of slim female, 28-37, to settle down. Photo a must. 9713 ✉

Pretty And Petite—38, Jewish female professional would like to meet a 35-47-year-old, self-aware, marriage-minded and fun-loving Jewish male professional with whom to share films, dining out and beach vacations. Photo preferred. 9710 ✉

Me: Outdoorsy, Athletic—Jewish-Latin professional female, 49. You: professional man - articulate, loving partner. 9686 ✉

37, Chinese-American Lady—Has kissed many frogs and is ready to meet her prince. Petite/attractive and successful dentist seeks Chinese professional male with high standards, for a serious relationship. Note/photo. 9722 ✉

Tall, Warm, Caring Entrepreneur—55 years old, seeking slim, caring woman, 38-48, to share all life has to offer. If you are interested, please send photo. 9682✉

First Ad! Doll Seeks Guy—I'm adorable, classy, soft, romantic, young 50s, green-eyed blond, who'll "Know When My Love Comes Along"... He's a financially secure, 56-68 years, medium height, Jewish, nonsmoking, Brooks Brothers type. Picture we'll come home to: love, laughter, caring, NY Times crossword puzzles...into the next millennium. 9657 ✉

Beautiful And Elegant Widow—50s, 5'7", 116 lbs, artist, vivacious and worldly, seeks quality, professional gentleman of substance, who understands the joys of marriage. Photo and letter appreciated. 9725 ✉

Pretty LI Redhead—28, slim, Jewish, PhD, seeks a handsome Jewish man, 28-35, nonsmoker, who is self-aware and self-assured. Photo, please. 9708 ✉

Can This Actually Work?—Looking for attractive, athletic, single Jewish female to 36. I'm a good-looking banker, 41. Only respond if you are an honest-to-goodness, genuinely nice person. 9695 ✉ ☎

Rebuilding—White male. After 7 years of a loving marriage, my wife suddenly left for a gay affair. Divorce pending, no kids, 47, look younger, nonsmoker, fit, 5'10", 160, southern rural roots, skiing, tennis, outdoor activities, wine, culture. Financially secure. Job requires travel. Loyal to a fault, family values. Sensual. Want to give and need a lot of love, care and romance. No commitments for a while. Still want to be a father. Note/photo. 9700 ✉

Handsome, Irish, Harvard-Educated—Financially independent, fit, 5'10", gentleman, early 50s, seeks very smart, athletic, petite, wholesome, financially independent, Christian, 40-plus lady for travel and long-term relationship. Photo a must. 9690 ✉

Beautiful Frog Looking For Prince—To kiss - fun, athletic, professional Jewish female, 36 - loves to live life to the fullest ...looking for a great match. 9656 ✉

Good-Looking And Successful—Professional seeks compatible woman, 27-34. I'm 34, 5'11", dark brown hair, fit, Ivy-educated (MBA), outgoing, warm, fun, good listener. Seeks similar traits in an accomplished woman (likely a lawyer or Wall Street type). Note/phone. Photo a must. 9715 ✉

Our Time Is Now—A compassionate, sensitive, humorous, successful man, 42, athletic, 5'10", seeks fit Jewish woman, 30-38, romantic, intelligent, outgoing, giving, for a lifetime of love and adventure. Note. Photo helpful. 9712 ✉

Smart And Striking—(914) Jewish divorcee - long hair, beautiful body, 5'3", witty, ambitious... Missing only tall, trim, good-looking male, 36-46, who can appreciate intelligence, versatility and amicable competition. Note/photo. 9654✉

Engaging, Attractive, Thoughtful—Artist/college professor, fit, fun, 42, slim, Jewish, seeks intelligent and secure, professionally established man (38-50) with a sense of humor and an interest in the arts. Note, please. 9724 ✉

Interesting And Accomplished—Professional Jewish (nonreligious!) woman, who loves the arts, cooking, sports, NPR. I've got a good heart, warm smile, great legs! I'm intellectually curious, pretty, slender, early 40s. 9721 ✉ ☎

Live From Lincoln Center—Seeking 60ish male to be in "concert" with. You: warm, educated, sense of humor, integrity. I: the same, trim, blue-eyed professional, easy to look at, easy to be with. We: enjoy many interests together. 9711 ✉

Sexy, Classy—50s, French-Russian heritage, seeks gentleman in her life. Replies/letter/address. 9702 ✉

Beautiful, Fit LI Blond—44, tall Jewish MD and mom of one seeks Jewish single dad. Photo helps. 9714 ✉ ☎

Smart, Sexy, Spirited—Lovely 47, slim blond seeks gentle, warm, playful man, 40-55, for happily ever after. 9663 ✉ ☎

Nice Guy—43, Jewish man, 5'10", tired of carousel dating life. Enjoys sports, movies, fine/casual dining, good conversation. Seeks like-minded, attractive woman, 30-38, for long-term relationship. Reply requires note/photo. 9679 ✉

Gay White Female—Intelligent, active, attractive and fit, seeks attractive, feminine, fit woman, 30-40. 9729 ✉ ☎

Warmhearted—Successful, pretty Jewish woman, 35, with eclectic interests, would ike to meet a warmhearted, successful ewish man, 35-45. Note. 9723 ✉☎

Let's Build A Fire—After a day of skiing and talk about the meaning of life. Successful professional male, 43, 6'3", athletic, loves the outdoors. Willing to exchange photos. 9659 ✉☎

Jewish Female—49, two grown children - likes movies, theater. Looking for professional Jewish man. 9685 ✉

Conservative University Professor—50s, divorced, muscular, chiseled features. Currently abiding in liberal Park Slope but desirous of suburban relocation. Seeks mature, non-trendy woman with own career. Photo, please. 9709 ✉

Life Is Good—And I'm looking for someone who feels the same. Very good-ooking, divorced, fit, long-legged, blue-eyed blond, 5'7", a truly young 49 - smart, fun, adventurous and a person of great character. Treasure family and friends, ove children (am adopting a child) and want a man to be an important part of my already substantive life. I'm a professional woman, involved in the arts. Love music and theater. Seeking a good-looking, tall, 43-53, confident, kind and very alive man who takes on life's challenges and lives with courage and vision. 9731 ✉☎

For Men Only: Holiday Gift Special!—Order this dynamic, sexy, pretty, creative, 5'2", size 6, 50, package of curves. Brains, wit, style and great eyes are included. Comes with batteries charged for passionate, playful, sharing love affair with best friend for life. Shoppers must be 50-65, sane, sensitive, sincere and successful. Note/phone. 9661 ✉☎

Great-Looking Designer—Green eyes, long legs, slim and restless, also funny/smart, seeks wildly attractive, moderately difficult, highly intelligent man, 50 plus, for friendship, fun, and perhaps more. Let's exchange phone/photo. 9683 ✉☎

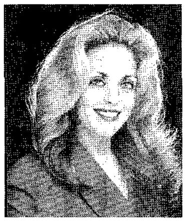
Great Jewish Guy—Handsome, professional, good sense of humor, many interests, 45, 5'8" - seeks easygoing, slim Jewish gal, 30-45, for fun times and lasting relationship. Photo please. 9687 ✉☎

Ms. Right—Seeks able man of substance, means, manners, looks, 36-49. 9730 ✉

Looking For A Special Woman?—Are you mid 30s-40, mature, handsome, successful, fun, sincere, sense of humor, athletic and seeking a relationship that could lead to marriage and children? If yes, we should chat! I am mid 30s, 5'4", very pretty, petite and in great shape. I am very athletic, unique sense of humor, enjoy the city, beach, travel, friends and life in general. What's missing is someone to share it with. I never imagined placing an ad, but life is busy, I don't do the bar scene... If you are a special guy, please reply. Note/photo. 9697 ✉

I Want Kids (Several)—I'm 5'11", 175, professional, adventurous, divorced (no kids). Seek educated woman (30-35), child-free but crazy about having children. Photo a must. 9674 ✉

Former Male Model—Now businessman, 36, nice chauvinist with traditional values. Desires intelligent, warm, spiritual, passionate woman, 20-38, for relaxed dinners, sporting and concert dates, possible marriage and children. Prefer attractive, long-haired, shapely Italian/Spanish type (but not that important). Note/photo/phone. 9327 ✉



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Ready For Real—Pretty, passionate, nonreligious Jewish child psychologist, 37. Looking for an intelligent, down-to-earth, genuine man who sings in the car, laughs out loud at a joke, cares about people and ideas, and is also ready for real. 9671 ✉☎

A Kiss To Build A Dream On—Very pretty, Irish, blue-eyed blond, bright, fit, upbeat, 30s, seeks single male, 30-47, with looks, wit, warmth, integrity and heart of gold, to share life, love and family. (914), (201), (212) a plus. Note/photo. 9716 ✉

Gay White Male—36, tall, charming and very handsome. Enjoys France, the opera, sushi, NYC, romance and more. Looking to meet tall, attractive, sincere and professional counterpart for possible relationship. Note/photo please. 9698 ✉

International Businesswoman—Blond, blue eyes, 5'6", fit, attractive, charming, vivacious, seeks man, 32-37, professional, Northern/Western European background, for friendship and possible relationship. Note/phone/photo. 9684 ✉

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MARY ANN MADDEN #897

NEW YORK MAGAZINE COMPETITION

"Wendy Stark and I ran into Cain and Abel at Orso, sitting outside (well, Abel was) and smoking. I asked what they'd heard about the big fight in the Garden and they said nada. At the next table, Marvin Davis (a close friend of Eve according to Nancy Reagan) with Chris Darden. They called out 'Hello, Gus' but did not come over. I figured they knew more about this thing than they were saying."

Above, Dominick Dunne on a biblical event. Competitors are invited to describe a Book of Genesis event as related by a well-known person. Under 75 words, please, and indicate whose style you are, um, taking on.

Results of Competition 894, in which you were asked to define a person of fiction or fact whose name is altered by a one-letter addition.

Report:: This one asked you to add a letter, not switch one. No substitutions. No chicken salad on whole-wheat toast. But delicious. Random old and new duplications: Dr. Truth. Edith Pilaf. Iraq Gershwin. Don Imust. Busboy Berkeley. Dusting Hoffman. Derek Jester. Oscar de la Rental. Chevy Chaser. Al Goren. Glenn Closet. Skim Novak. Samuel F. B. Morose. Gladys Knight and the Pimps. Salman Rushdiet. Geraldo Riverat. Jack Parlance. Tomb Selleck. Don Hop. Noël Cowbard. King Tutu. Blarney. Bugsy Bunny. Utah Hagen. Umpa Thurman. Better Davis. Doris Dayo. Patrick Sewing. Attila the Hunk. Rug Paul. Ali Babar. Paul Reviser. Effably, Barbara Streisand. And not a moment too soon.

First Prizes of two-year subscriptions to *New York* to:

CHARLES DIANA GIBSON—the artist formerly known as Prince and Princess of Wales.
Dot Edwards, Galena, Mo.

SKY SPERLING—frequent flyer in the Air Club for Men.
Terry Bussell, Henderson, Nev.

BEN-HURL—Roman who took one chariot ride too many at the Circus Maximus.
Elisa Falciglia, Reston, Va.

Runner-up prizes of one-year subscriptions to *New York* to:

RALPHT FIENNES (Raft Fines)—linguist; author of *Words Don't Sound Like They Look.*
J. M. Tribelli, N.Y.C.

DIANE AIRBUS—jet-set paparazza.
Paula Doherty, Tiverton, R.I.

I'M CLAUDIUS—the King, and you're not.
Sharon Lawyer, Rye, N.Y.

And Honorable Mention to:

MARC ANTONYM—contrarian eulogist: "I come to raise Caesar, not to damn him."
Susan Harriman, San Francisco, Calif.

HANS AARP—granddadaist (see also: MAN GRAY).
Chris Doyle, Burke, Va.

L. NINO CERRUTI—hottest designer in the South Pacific.
T. Nash, Winston-Salem, N.C.

MADAM—the first entrepreneuse.
C. McShade, Pittsburgh, Pa.
similarly: Laurent Drogin, N.Y.C.

SWILL ROGERS—beloved vaudevillian: "I never met a pig I didn't like."
Bob Jones, Sun City, Ariz.

BABE LINCOLN—frequent overnight guest at the White House.
Stephen Rosenberg, Ardmore, Pa.

ELIZABETH SHUPE—lead singer for sixties girl group.
Bruce Karp, Hackensack, N.J.

SANDY WARHOL—founder of Pop Arf movement.
Rosemary Latimore, Charlotte, N.C.

PAUL VIG—seventies Vatican financial wizard.
Harry Malone, Jamestown, N.Y.

PEE-WEE SHERMAN—diminutive Civil War general.
Amory Sharpe, N.Y.C.

ERIK THE REDO—Icelandic upholsterer.
Douglas Monaghan, Floral Park, N.Y.

NORMAN E-MAILER—author of *The Naked and the Unread.*
A. L. Colby, Metuchen, N.J.

NOAH WEBSITER—compiler of the first Internet dictionary.
Lauren Foley, Cranston, R.I.

RINGOLETTO—drummer and court jester to the Duke of Mantua.
Ghislaine Bauernfreund, N.Y.C.

SEDAN PENN—star of *Dead Man Driving.*
Richard Fried, Brooklyn

EDWARD EVERETT WHALE—marine biologist and author, *Manatee Without a Country.*
Tanner Foust, Longmont, Col.

CATO THE GELDER—most feared centurion in the Pubic Wars.
Jack Westmoreland, Sterling, Va.

ERNEST & JULIO GALLON—discount vintners.
Natalie Wittenbrook, San Francisco, Calif.
Tom Frenkel, Sunnyside, N.Y.

OLEO TOLSTOY—author of generic version of *War and Grease.*
Teresa Heines, Niskayuna, N.Y
C. Olds, Freeport, Me.

LOUIS "SNATCHMO" ARMSTRONG—light-fingered jazz trumpeter.
Louise Jackson, Somerset, Mass.

CHER GUEVARA—plastic surgeon to the downtrodden.
Arthur B. Rubinstein, Los Angeles, Calif.

CHEZ GUEVARA—owner of bistro featuring the finest in French-Marxist cuisine.
Larry Laiken, N.Y.C.

ANNA WINETOUR—Napa Valley fashion guide.
Inger Pettygrove, Charlottesville, Va.

GEORGE BLUSH—president who barfed on television.
Hank Volker, Boca Raton, Fla.

FLOP ZIEGFELD—master showman's unsuccessful brother.
Raymond E. Benenson, Niskayuna, N.Y.

SHALE BOGGS—explorer seeking site for oil.
Myra Voigt, Sinking Spring, Pa.

ATTILA THE HUNG—a really swinging dude, executed by the Visigoths.
John Foshee, Austin, Tex.

PETER OK TOOLE—porn star.
Phyllis Joffe, Pomona, N.Y.

BASIL RATHBONER—British porn star.
Gary M. Simon, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

SAME SHEPARD—cloned owner of Dolly.
Emmett R. Salzberg, Stratford, Conn.

VICTOR HUGGO—long-winded yet romantic clown.
Sandra Hull, Arlington, Va.

KNIETZSCHE—potato-head philosopher who proclaimed "Spud is dead."
Jean Sorensen, Herndon, Va.

VINCENT PRINCE—the actor formerly known as Price.
Ellen Z. Schwarts, New Fairfield, Conn.

GARY SCOOPER—movie star and conscientious dog walker.
Leonard Sims, N.Y.C.

L AL COOL J—Israeli rapper.
Steve Snider, N.Y.C.

RUNE D.M.C.—Druid rap group.
Jill Frenkel, Sunnyside, N.Y.

Competition Rules: POSTCARDS, PLEASE, TYPEWRITTEN IF POSSIBLE. ONE ENTRY ONLY should be sent to Competition Number 897, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022-6999, or e-mailed to 104700.2563@compuserve.com. It must be received by December 12. Editor's decisions are final, and all entries become property of *New York.* Results and winners' names will appear in the January 12 issue.

NORAD HELMER—air-defense strategist and malcontent wife.
Joe Gratz, Milwaukee, Wis.

TIM TRUSSERT—moderator, *Meet the Bench Press.*
Fran Manne, Mahwah, N.J.

LAUREN BADCALL—referee who whistles by putting her lips together and blowing.
Christopher Lui, Ramsey, N.J.

WALTER CRONKLITE—Dan Rather.
Saul Kahan, Los Angeles, Calif.

M.C. BUTTERFLY—transgender rap artist.
A. Lapidus, Bellmore, N.Y.

SONG OF SAM—Sing Sing inmate.
Elaine G. Amdur, Kingston, Pa.

PHEIDRIPPIDES—Greek who swam 26 miles from Marathon to Athens.
Emily Sylvester, South Windsor, Conn.

HENRI FUSELIT—volatile English painter.
Brian Bracey, Carrboro, N.C.

CLAUS VON BUYLOW—Santa's broker.
Alexa Geller, West Hartford, Conn.

SMOKEY THE BEARD—mascot for Gillette: "Only *you* can prevent razor burn."
Joan Ruttenberg, Rockville, Md.

JOAN OF ARCO—pump girl in Exxon Provence, a.k.a. the "Maid of Oileans."
Wendy Gottlieb, New Haven, Conn.

ARTHUR PENNE—director of spaghetti Westerns: *Little Big Manicotti.*
Joel Sitrin, Alexandria, Va.

DIORGENES—cynic who designed the perfect man.
Lucy Oblonsky, Newark, Del.

DEEPARK CHOPRA—spiritualist and bottled-water magnate.
A. B. Hale, N.Y.C.

ODEMETER—Greek goddess of scansion.
Karen Bracey, Burke, Va.

ETHELRED THE GUNREADY—trigger-happy king of England.
Sarah Gay, Durham, N.C.

FURBAN II—first pope to fight for animal rights.
Linda Giordano, Florence, Ala.

MARCHDUKE FERDINAND—ill-fated Austrian parade marshal.
Jane Kretzmann, Vienna, Va.

JUAN GRIDS—Spaniard who painted by the numbers.
Holly Thomis, Cambridge, Mass.

HOUDINIT—detective for chain store.
Mary Ann Code, N.Y.C.

DRIVER PHOENIX—stuntman in *Racing Arizona.*
Abigail Dobbs, Florence, Ala.

ARANXTA SANCHEZ-VICARIOS—champion of spectator sports.
John R. Lewis, Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

DHARMA & GRIEG—composers: *The Song of India and Norway.*
Harry Zucker, Far Rockaway, N.Y.

JAY GATSBUY—enigmatic Long Island gun collector.
Debbie Bennett, Jersey City, N.J.

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Solutions to last week's puzzles

■	S	E	S	A	M	E	■	M	E	R	M	A	N	■
■	O	■	L	■	A	■	N	■	M	■	A	■	O	■
P	L	A	Y	■	C	H	E	A	P	S	K	A	T	E
■	D	■	P	■	B	■	W	■	I	■	E	■	H	■
M	I	S	E	R	E	■	S	E	R	A	P	H	I	C
■	E	■	■	■	T	■	P	■	E	■	L	■	N	■
B	R	O	N	C	H	I	A	L	■	B	A	N	G	■
■	■	■	E	■	■	■	P	■	■	■	N	■	■	■
■	S	K	U	A	■	D	E	S	P	I	S	I	N	G
■	E	■	R	■	S	■	R	■	E	■	■	■	O	■
R	E	P	O	R	T	E	R	■	N	U	D	I	S	T
■	T	■	P	■	O	■	A	■	A	■	A	■	T	■
T	H	E	A	T	R	I	C	A	L	■	N	A	R	K
■	E	■	T	■	E	■	K	■	T	■	C	■	U	■
■	S	C	H	I	S	M	■	L	Y	C	E	U	M	■

L	O	F	T	■	O	T	I	S	■	■	■	S	L	I	D	■	S	H	A	Q
E	Z	R	A	■	A	R	N	A	Z	■	C	H	I	N	O	■	T	U	T	U
H	O	A	X	■	R	U	B	L	E	K	E	E	L	E	R	■	E	M	M	A
A	N	N	■	I	S	E	E	■	A	N	A	L	Y	Z	E	■	R	E	E	D
R	E	C	O	N	■	■	D	E	L	O	S	■	■	■	M	I	N	K	■	■
■	■	C	A	D	E	T	■	R	O	B	E	R	T	D	I	N	E	R	O	■
B	R	A	T	■	L	I	M	I	T	■	■	C	H	E	■	G	R	O	P	E
O	O	P	S	■	E	D	G	E	■	C	H	A	R	A	D	E	■	N	A	Y
W	A	R	■	S	C	I	S	■	P	R	O	■	O	L	E	■	■	E	R	E
E	M	A	N	A	T	E	■	S	E	A	M	E	N	■	F	A	I	N	T	S
■	■	■	F	L	O	R	I	N	S	Z	I	E	G	F	E	L	D	■	■	■
M	I	D	L	E	R	■	N	O	T	I	N	G	■	E	N	D	I	N	G	S
I	C	I	■	■	A	N	T	■	L	E	G	■	E	R	D	A	■	O	R	E
T	I	N	■	B	L	O	O	P	E	R	■	L	A	R	A	■	B	R	I	G
E	N	A	C	T	■	A	T	A	■	■	S	A	T	I	N	■	A	M	M	O
■	G	R	O	U	C	H	O	M	A	R	K	S	■	S	T	O	L	A	■	■
■	■	S	A	S	H	■	■	■	S	U	I	T	S	■	■	U	L	N	A	E
R	A	H	S	■	I	N	S	T	I	L	L	■	L	A	I	R	■	L	U	X
A	L	O	T	■	M	I	C	H	A	E	L	Q	U	I	D	■	Z	I	T	I
G	E	R	E	■	P	L	A	I	N	■	S	U	E	D	E	■	E	R	O	S
A	X	E	D	■	S	E	T	S	■	■	■	O	S	S	A	■	E	A	S	T

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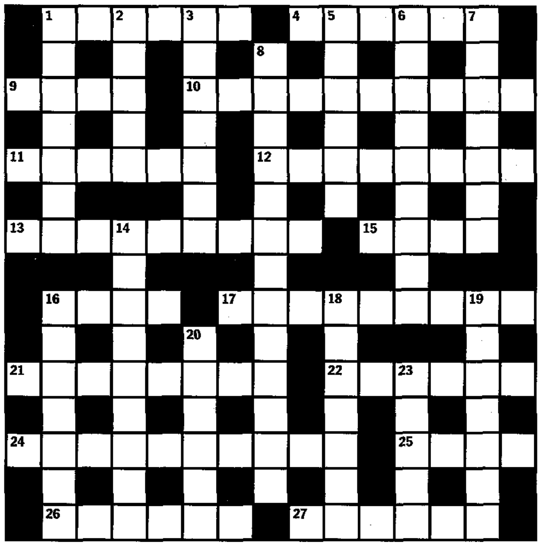
The 'Guardian' Crossword

ACROSS

1 Withdraw in tears. (3,3)
4 Sailor joins a Scotsman on the roads. (6)
9 Fitted front removed from piece of furniture. (4)
10 Sends a plea for restoration of seaside walks. (10)
11 They cut dashing figures. (6)
12 Mark closely and push back the club three-quarters. (4,4)
13 Crazy about Mum, in a manner of speaking. (9)
15 Error found in the galley-proof. (4)
16 It helps to make shoes wear well. (4)
17 Forced into service—and unlikely to forget it. (9)
21 Powerful passage in literature? (8)
22 But it's not how boxers settle matters. (6)
24 "Get mean, man!" ordered the bosses. (10)
25 I take round a thank-you letter. (4)
26 Dislike of French exam. (6)
27 Knock beer back with Edward and end up in high spirits. (6)



DOWN

1 Patched up—like some old streets. (7)
2 Give up interest in shares. (5)
3 Flower familiar to one in S. Africa. (7)
5 Commercials about smart fashions. (6)
6 Dish prepared from stale lamb? (4,5)
7 Gain from the elimination of the crime. (5,2)
8 Where all the goods will be sold out. (4-3,6)
14 Watchful braves not taken by surprise. (9)
16 Often behind bars when captured, but maybe paroled. (7)
18 Novel, article and story. (7)
19 Former spouse called, agitated. (7)
20 Those who do nothing but just tick over? (6)
23 He's one to do it wrong. (5)

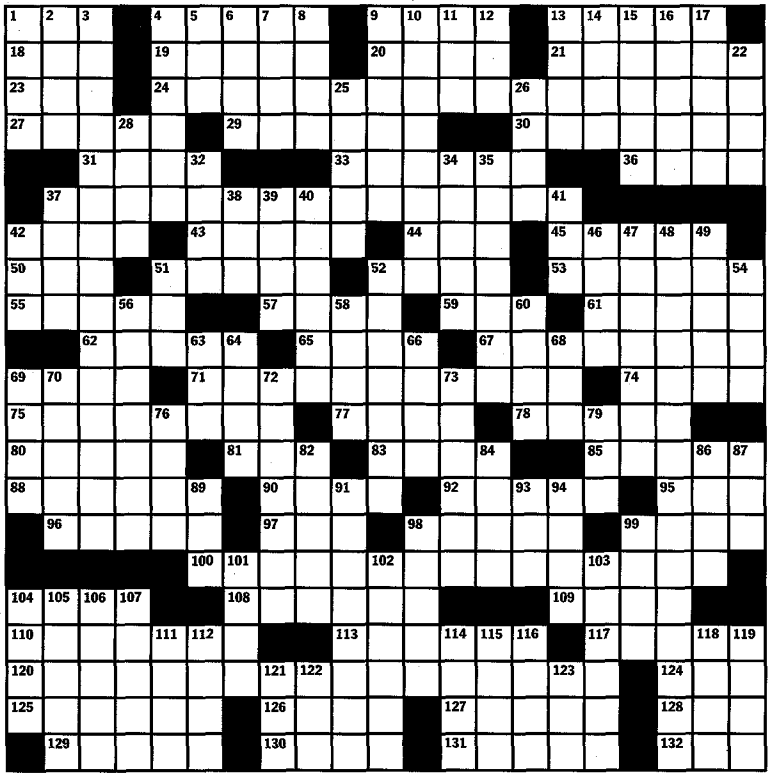
'Subtitles': 'Cue' Crossword • By Maura B. Jacobson

ACROSS

1 Make lace
4 Melted together
9 Sonic feedback
13 Fossil resin
18 Burnt bit
19 Busy, as a phone
20 Shifter's concern
21 Croquet need
23 Jackie's sister
24 "The Last Days of Pompeii"
27 Desert flora
29 Café ——
30 Simple ballroom dance
31 What the suspicious smell
33 Inedible oranges
36 Fells
37 "This Gun for Hire"
42 Quite a few
43 Loser to Dwight
44 Louis Quatorze, e.g.
45 The price of a dozen, in an expression
50 Chief Ouray's tribe
51 Act uppity
52 Dating from
53 Legendary Paul
55 '50s First Lady
57 Jewelers' sales
59 Unaccounted-for G.I.
61 "It's —— work we go"
62 Retort to "are so!"
65 Civil-rights pioneer Parks
67 Deletions
69 Pet of whodunits
71 "Eat Drink Man Woman"
74 Successful stud
75 Elevate
77 Like Sabin's vaccine
78 End of a Kilmer poem
80 "Tomorrow" singer
81 Sault —— Marie
83 Journey
85 "Lou Grant" star
88 Walks like a pigeon
90 Subsides
92 Dean's onetime partner
95 Actress Ruby
96 Type of rocket
97 Palme ——, Cannes film prize
98 Comic actor Jack of old films
99 Bouffant hair style
100 "The French Connection"
104 Pierre's girl friend
108 Small piano
109 Italian city of a Napoleonic victory
110 Chambermaid's entrée
113 "By the Time —— Phoenix"
117 Carpet nails
120 "You're in the Army Now"
124 Krazy feline of the comics
125 Tranquil
126 Hatching place
127 "Casey —— Bat"
128 Ron who played Tarzan
129 Is a tenant
130 Villa d'——
131 Amorous pursuer
132 Mardi Gras VIP

DOWN

1 Dusting powder
2 Under sail
3 "Love in the Afternoon"
4 Pertaining to offspring
5 Merkel or O'Connor
6 Capital of Fiji
7 Jacob's twin
8 Allot cards
9 Inflated self-importance
10 Horse-legged men of myth
11 Crone
12 Table scrap
13 Pulpit finale
14 Former filly
15 Redden
16 Cream of the crop
17 Plea to a subscriber
22 Recipe amts.
25 New Zealand native
26 Hydrant attachment
28 Cafeteria tote
32 "Untouchables" agent
34 Marrying man
35 Enlightened
37 Computer input
38 Ancient Tokyo
39 Whip
40 Horse operas
41 Island off Croatia
42 Not talking
46 Pairs
47 Imbues
48 "The Light That Failed"
49 Chowhound
51 Upper House: abbr.
52 Categorizes
54 It smells
56 Poetic-freedom advocate
58 Marquand sleuth
60 Kind of rug
63 Opposite of seld
64 Ball props
66 —— cry (much different)
68 Adam of rock
69 At the drop of ——
70 Mexican mister
72 Bought into a poker game
73 Biblical prophet
76 Will beneficiary
79 Sun emanation
82 Where Christ stopped, in fiction
84 Lap dog, familiarly
86 Spooky: var.
87 Vintage car
89 Yule drink
91 Most salty
93 Moroccan highlands
94 The McCoy
98 Beaver's kin
99 Verdi heroine
101 "—— sew, so shall ye rip"
102 Nullify
103 Machree of song
104 Leased units: abbr.
105 "Politically Incorrect" emcee
106 Grenoble's river
107 German steel city
111 Superman's alias
112 Curie and Arden
114 Lose iciness
115 Josip Broz
116 Palindromic name
118 Crinkly cabbage
119 River of Hades
121 Compass pt.
122 Toady's reply
123 "Evita" role



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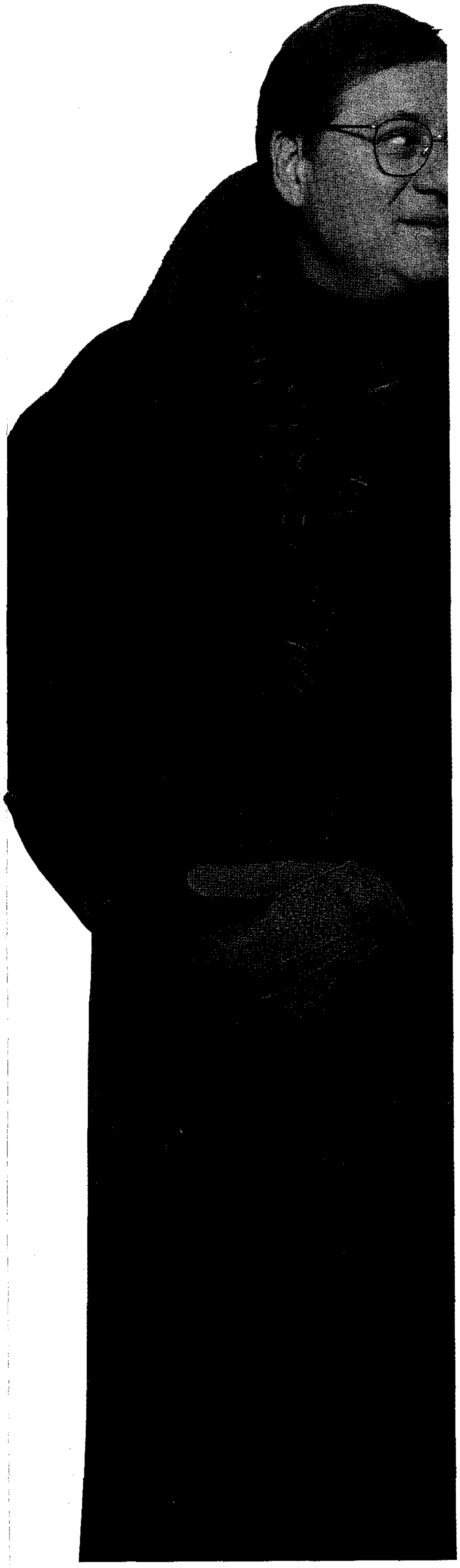

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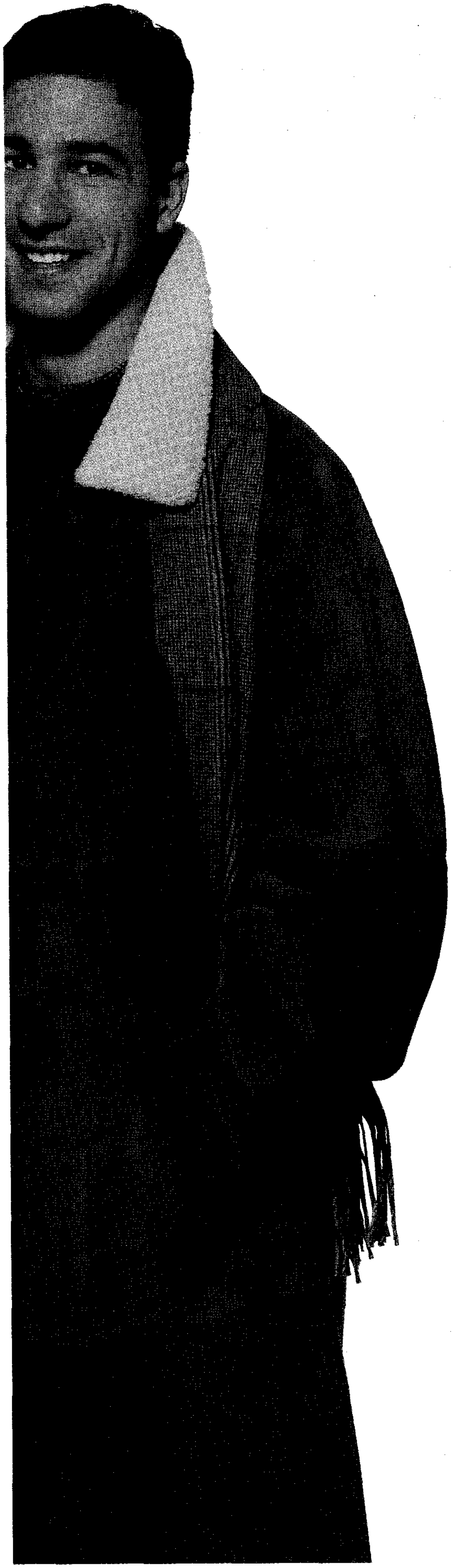

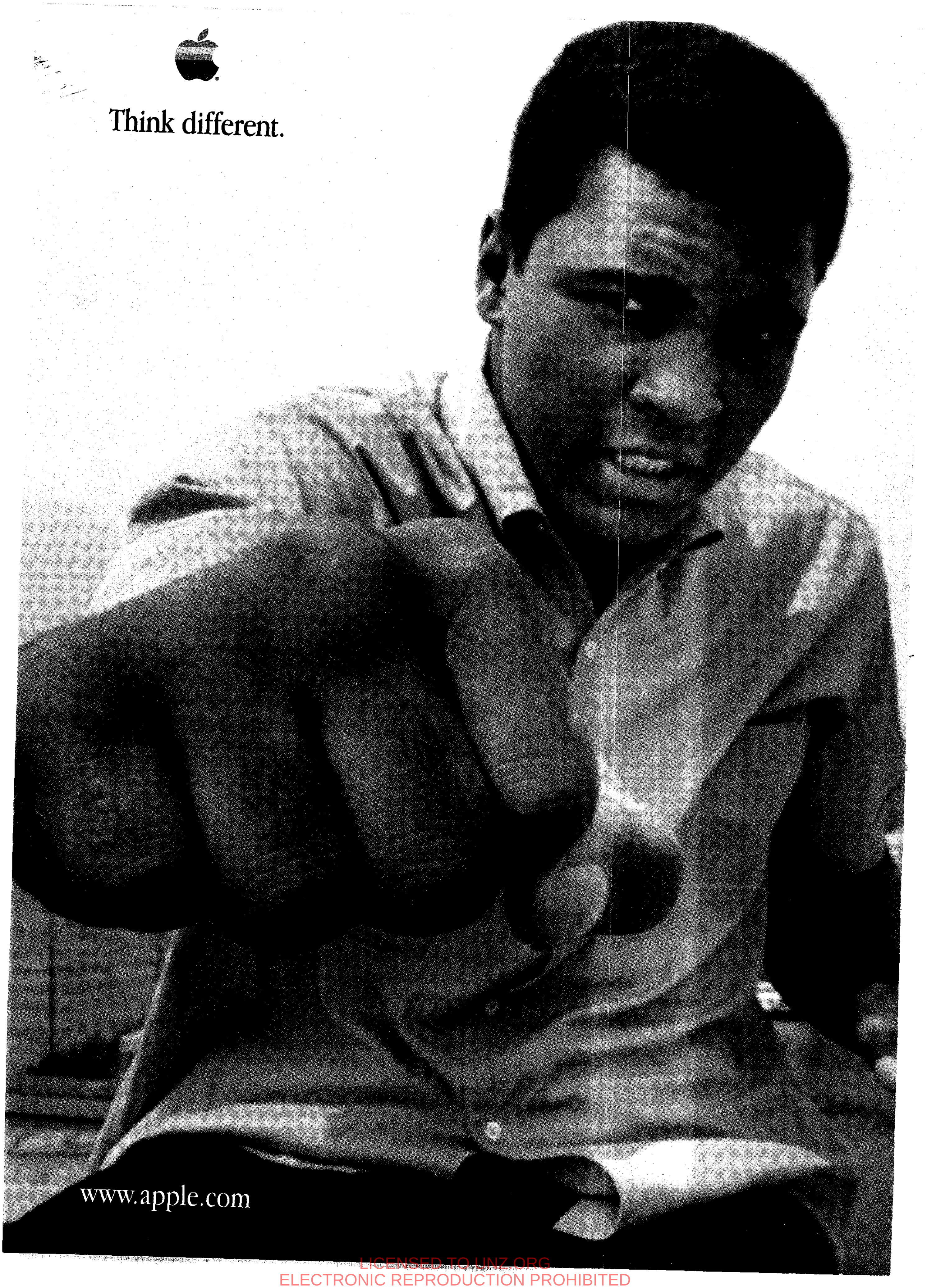
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